PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY
NON MINISTRARI SED MINISTRARE
INCORPORATED
MAY 12. 1906

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

THE GIFT OF

H. C. Ives

C. A. BRADLEY'S

LIBRARY.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/tracts-american-unitarian-association_1837_10

TRACTS

OF

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

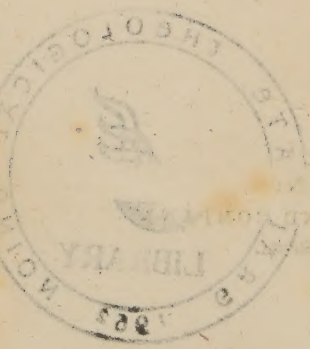
FIRST SERIES.....VOL. X.

CONTAINING NUMBERS CVIII. TO CXIX.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY,
134 Washington Street.
1837.

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962

BX
9813
A5
v.10



CONTENTS OF VOL. X.

Page.

A Discourse on some of the Distinguishing Opinions of Unitarians. By William E. Channing, D. D. - - - - - - - 1

On Profession of Religion. By Rev. Orville Dewey, 49

Thoughts on the Personality of the Word of God. By Noah Worcester, D. D. - - - 93

The Scriptural Doctrine of Good Works. By Edward B. Hall, - - - - - - 117

On the Use and Meaning of the phrase "Holy Spirit." By Henry Ware, D. D. - 141

A Review of Atheism, for Unlearned Christians. By Noah Worcester, D. D. - - 163

Virtue, not Happiness, the End of Man's Creation. By James D. Green, - - - - - 209

Why should we labor to extend our faith? By S. K. Lothrop, - - - - 225

The History of Christ, a testimony that the Father is the Only True God and Sole Object of Adoration. By W. J. Fox, - - - 237

Religious and Moral Wants of the West. By William G. Eliot, St Louis, Missouri, - 253

On Denying the Lord Jesus. By the late Bernard Whitman, - - - - - - - 273

The Twelfth Report of American Unitarian Association, with the proceedings of the annual meeting, May 30, 1837, - - - 319

CONTENTS OF VOL. X.

A Discourse on some of the Distinguishing Opinions of Unitarians. By William E. Channing, D. D. - - - - - - - 1

On Profession of Religion. By Rev. Orville Dewey, 49

Thoughts on the Personality of the Word of God. By Noah Worcester, D. D. - - - - 93

The Scriptural Doctrine of Good Works. By Edward H. Hall, - - - - - - 117

On the Use and Meaning of the phrase "Holy Spirit." By Henry Ware, D. D. - - 141

A Review of Atheism, for Unlearned Christians. By Noah Worcester, D. D. - - - 163

Virtue, not Happiness, the End of Man's Creation. By James D. Green, - - - - 209

Why should we labor to extend our faith? By S. K. Lothrop, - - - - - 225

The History of Christ, a testimony that the Father is the Only True God and Sole Object of Adoration. By W. J. Fox, - - - - 237

Religious and Moral Wants of the West. By William G. Eliot, St Louis, Missouri, - - 153

On Denying the Lord Jesus. By the late Bernard Whitman, - - - - - - - 273

The Twelfth Report of American Unitarian Association, with the proceedings of the annual meeting, May 30, 1837, - - - - 319

1st Series. No. 108.

A

DISCOURSE

ON SOME OF THE

DISTINGUISHING OPINIONS OF UNITARIANS,

DELIVERED AT BALTIMORE IN 1819.

By WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D. D.

TWELFTH EDITION.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

LEONARD C. BOWLES, 147 WASHINGTON STREET.

JULY, 1836.

Price 5 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, SCHOOL ST.

DISCOURSE.

1 Thessalonians, v, 21.

"*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*"

The peculiar circumstances of this occasion not only justify, but seem to demand a departure from the course generally followed by preachers at the introduction of a brother into the sacred office. It is usual to speak of the nature, design, duties and advantages of the christian ministry; and on these topics I should now be happy to insist, did I not remember that a minister is to be given this day to a religious society, whose peculiarities of opinion have drawn upon them much remark, and may I not add, much reproach. Many good minds, many sincere Christians, I am aware, are apprehensive that the solemnities of this day are to give a degree of influence to principles which they deem false and injurious. The fears and anxieties of such men I respect; and, believing that they are grounded in part on mistake, I have thought it my duty to lay before you, as clearly as I can, some of the distinguishing opinions of that class of Christians in our country, who are known to sympathize with this religious society. I must ask your patience, for such a subject is not to be despatched

in a narrow compass. I must also ask you to remember, that it is impossible to exhibit, in a single discourse, our views of every doctrine of revelation, much less the differences of opinion which are known to subsist among ourselves. I shall confine myself to topics, on which our sentiments have been misrepresented, or which distinguish us most widely from others. May I not hope to be heard with candor. God deliver us all from prejudice and unkindness, and fill us with the love of truth and virtue.

There are two natural divisions under which my thoughts will be arranged. I shall endeavor to unfold, 1st, The principles which we adopt in interpreting the Scriptures. And 2dly, Some of the doctrines, which the Scriptures, so interpreted, seem to us clearly to express.

I. We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the New Testament. The dispensation of Moses, compared with that of Jesus, we consider as adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired apostles, we regard as of

divine authority, and profess to make the rule of our lives.

This authority, which we give to the Scriptures, is a reason, we conceive, for studying them with peculiar care, and for inquiring anxiously into the principles of interpretation, by which their true meaning may be ascertained. The principles adopted by the class of Christians, in whose name I speak, need to be explained, because they are often misunderstood. We are particularly accused of making an unwarrantable use of reason in the interpretation of Scripture. We are said to exalt reason above revelation, to prefer our own wisdom to God's. Loose and undefined charges of this kind are circulated so freely, that we think it due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to express our views with some particularity.

Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner, as that of other books. We believe that God, when he speaks to the human race, conforms, if we may so say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more, than if communicated in an unknown tongue?

Now all books, and all conversation, require in the reader or hearer the constant exercise of reason; or their true import is only to be obtained by continual comparison and inference. Human language, you well know, admits various interpretations; and every word and every sentence must be modified and explained according to the subject which is discussed, according to the purposes, feelings, circumstances and principles of

the writer, and according to the genius and idioms of the language which he uses. These are acknowledged principles in the interpretation of human writings; and a man, whose words we should explain without reference to these principles, would reproach us justly with a criminal want of candor, and an intention of obscuring or distorting his meaning.

Were the Bible written in a language and style of its own, did it consist of words, which admit but a single sense, and of sentences wholly detached from each other, there would be no place for the principles now laid down. We could not reason about it, as about other writings. But such a book would be of little worth; and perhaps, of all books, the Scriptures correspond least to this description. The word of God bears the stamp of the same hand, which we see in his works. It has infinite connexions and dependencies. Every proposition is linked with others, and is to be compared with others, that its full and precise import may be understood. Nothing stands alone. The New Testament is built on the Old. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of Providence, requiring great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats of subjects on which we receive ideas from other sources besides itself; such subjects as the nature, passions, relations, and duties of man; and it expects us to restrain and modify its language by the known truths, which observation and experience furnish on these topics.

We profess not to know a book, which demands a more frequent exercise of reason than the Bible. In addition to the remarks now made on its infinite con-

nexions, we may observe, that its style nowhere affects the precision of science, or the accuracy of definition. Its language is singularly glowing, bold and figurative, demanding more frequent departures from the literal sense, than that of our own age and country, and consequently demanding more continual exercise of judgment. We find too, that the different portions of this book, instead of being confined to general truths, refer perpetually to the times when they were written, to states of society, to modes of thinking, to controversies in the church, to feelings and usages which have passed away, and without the knowledge of which we are constantly in danger of extending to all times, and places, what was of temporary and local application. We find, too, that some of these books are strongly marked by the genius and character of their respective writers, that the Holy Spirit did not so guide the apostles as to suspend the peculiarities of their minds, and that a knowledge of their feelings, and of the influences under which they were placed, is one of the preparations for understanding their writings. With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject, and the aim of the writer, his true meaning; and, in general, to make use of what is known, for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths.

Need I descend to particulars to prove that the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason? Take, for example, the style in which they generally speak of God, and observe how habitually they apply to him human passions and organs. Recollect the declarations of Christ,

that he came not to send peace, but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother, and pluck out the right eye; and a vast number of passages equally bold and unlimited. Recollect the unqualified manner in which it is said of Christians, that they possess all things, know all things, and can do all things. Recollect the verbal contradiction between Paul and James, and the apparent clashing of some parts of Paul's writings with the general doctrines and end of Christianity. I might extend the enumeration indefinitely; and who does not see, that we must limit all these passages by the known attributes of God, of Jesus Christ, and of human nature, and by the circumstances under which they were written, so as to give the language a quite different import from what it would require, had it been applied to different beings, or used in different connexions.

Enough has been said to show, in what sense we make use of reason in interpreting Scripture. From a variety of possible interpretations, we select that, which accords with the nature of the subject and the state of the writer, with the connexion of the passage, with the general strain of Scripture, with the known character and will of God, and with the obvious and acknowledged laws of nature. In other words, we believe that God never contradicts, in one part of Scripture, what he teaches in another; and never contradicts, in revelation, what he teaches in his works and providence. And we, therefore, distrust every interpretation, which, after deliberate attention, seems repugnant to any established truth. We reason about the Bible precisely as civilians

do about the constitution under which we live; who, you know, are accustomed to limit one provision of that venerable instrument by others, and to fix the precise import of its parts, by inquiring into its general spirit, into the intentions of its authors, and into the prevalent feelings, impressions, and circumstances of the time when it was framed. Without these principles of interpretation, we frankly acknowledge, that we cannot defend the divine authority of the Scriptures. Deny us this latitude, and we must abandon this book to its enemies.

We do not announce these principles as original, or peculiar to ourselves. All Christians occasionally adopt them, not excepting those, who most vehemently decry them, when they happen to menace some favorite article of their creed. All Christians are compelled to use them in their controversies with infidels. All sects employ them in their warfare with one another. All willingly avail themselves of reason, when it can be pressed into the service of their own party, and only complain of it, when its weapons wound themselves. None reason more frequently than those from whom we differ. It is astonishing what a fabric they rear from a few slight hints about the fall of our first parents; and how ingeniously they extract, from detached passages, mysterious doctrines about the divine nature. We do not blame them for reasoning so abundantly, but for violating the fundamental rules of reasoning, for sacrificing the plain to the obscure, and the general strain of Scripture to a scanty number of insulated texts.

We object strongly to the contemptuous manner in which human reason is often spoken of by our adversaries, because it leads, we believe, to universal skepticism.

If reason be so dreadfully darkened by the fall, that its most decisive judgments on religion are unworthy of trust, then Christianity, and even natural theology, must be abandoned; for the existence and veracity of God, and the divine original of Christianity, are conclusions of reason, and must stand or fall with it. If revelation be at war with this faculty, it subverts itself, for the great question of its truth is left by God to be decided at the bar of reason. It is worthy of remark, how nearly the bigot and the skeptic approach. Both would annihilate our confidence in our faculties, and both throw doubt and confusion over truth. We honor revelation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe, that it calls us to renounce our highest powers.

We indeed grant, that the use of reason in religion, is accompanied with danger. But we ask any honest man to look on the history of the church, and say, whether the renunciation of it be not still more dangerous. Besides, it is a plain fact, that men reason as erroneously on all subjects, as on religion. Who does not know the wild and groundless theories, which have been framed in physical and political science? But who ever supposed that we must cease to exercise reason on nature and society, because men have erred for ages in explaining them? We grant, that the passions continually, and sometimes fatally, disturb the rational faculty, in its inquiries into revelation. The ambitious contrive to find doctrines in the Bible, which favor their love of dominion. The timid and dejected discover there a gloomy system, and the mystical and fanatical, a visionary theology. The vicious can find examples or assertions on which to build the hope of a late repentance, or of acceptance on easy

terms. The falsely refined contrive to light on doctrines which have not been soiled by vulgar handling. But the passions do not distract the reason in religious, any more than in any other inquiries, which excite strong and general interest; and this faculty, of consequence, is not to be renounced in religion, unless we are prepared to discard it universally. The true inference from the almost endless errors, which have darkened theology, is, not that we are to neglect and disparage our powers, but to exert them more patiently, circumspectly, uprightly. The worst errors, after all, have sprung up in that church, which proscribes reason, and demands from its members implicit faith. The most pernicious doctrines have been the growth of the darkest times, when the general credulity encouraged bad men and enthusiasts to broach their dreams and inventions, and to stifle the faint remonstrances of reason, by the menaces of everlasting perdition. Say what we may, God has given us a rational nature, and will call us to account for it. We may let it sleep, but we do so at our peril. Revelation is addressed to us as rational beings. We may wish, in our sloth, that God had given us a system, demanding no labor of comparing, limiting and inferring. But such a system would be at variance with the whole character of our present existence; and it is the part of wisdom to take revelation, as it is given to us, and to interpret it by the help of the faculties, which it everywhere supposes, and on which it is founded.

To the views now given, an objection is commonly urged from the character of God. We are told, that God being infinitely wiser than men, his discoveries will surpass human reason. In a revelation from such a

teacher, we ought to expect propositions, which we cannot reconcile with one another, and which may seem to contradict established truths ; and it becomes us not to question or explain them away, but to believe, and adore, and to submit our weak and carnal reason to the divine word. To this objection, we have two short answers. We say, first, that it is impossible that a teacher of infinite wisdom, should expose those, whom he would teach, to infinite error. But if once we admit, that propositions, which in their literal sense appear plainly repugnant to one another, or to any known truth, are still to be literally understood and received, what possible limit can we set to the belief of contradictions? What shelter have we from the wildest fanaticism, which can always quote passages, that, in their literal and obvious sense, give support to its extravagances? How can the Protestant escape from transubstantiation, a doctrine most clearly taught us, if the submission of reason, now contended for, be a duty? How can we even hold fast the truth of revelation, for if one apparent contradiction may be true, so may another, and the proposition, that Christianity is false, though involving inconsistency, may still be a verity?

We answer again, that, if God be infinitely wise, he cannot sport with the understandings of his creatures. A wise teacher discovers his wisdom in adapting himself to the capacities of his pupils, not in perplexing them with what is unintelligible, not in distressing them with apparent contradictions, not in filling them with a skeptical distrust of their own powers. An infinitely wise teacher, who knows the precise extent of our minds, and the best method of enlightening them, will surpass all

other instructers in bringing down truth to our apprehension, and in showing its loveliness and harmony. We ought, indeed, to expect occasional obscurity in such a book as the bible, which was written for past and future ages, as well as for the present. But God's wisdom is a pledge, that whatever is necessary for *us*, and necessary for salvation, is revealed too plainly to be mistaken, and too consistently to be questioned, by a sound and upright mind. It is not the mark of wisdom, to use an unintelligible phraseology, to communicate what is above our capacities, to confuse and unsettle the intellect by appearances of contradiction. We honor our heavenly teacher too much to ascribe to him such a revelation. A revelation is a gift of light. It cannot thicken our darkness, and multiply our perplexities.

II. Having thus stated the principles according to which we interpret Scripture, I now proceed to the second great head of this discourse, which is, to state some of the views, which we derive from that sacred book, particularly those which distinguish us from other Christians.

I. In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's unity, or that there is one God, and one only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed, lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition, that there is one God, seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it, that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom underived and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive, that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people, who were set apart

to be the depositories of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair-breadth distinctions between being and person, which the sagacity of latter ages has discovered. We find no intimation, that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, or that God's unity was a quite different thing from the oneness of other intelligent beings.

We object to the doctrine of the trinity, that whilst acknowledging in words, it subverts in effect, the unity of God. According to this doctrine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed. It is difference of properties, and acts, and consciousness, which leads us to the belief of different intelligent beings, and if this mark fails us, our whole knowledge falls; we have no proof, that all the agents and persons in the universe are not one and the same mind. When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we

can do nothing more, than represent to ourselves three agents, distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those, which separate the persons of the trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding them as different beings, different minds?

We do then, with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the trinity. 'To us,' as to the apostle and the primitive Christians, 'there is one God, even the Father.' With Jesus, we worship the Father, as the only living and true God. We are astonished, that any man can read the New Testament, and avoid the conviction, that the Father alone is God. We hear our Saviour continually appropriating this character to the Father. We find the Father continually distinguished from Jesus by this title. 'God sent his Son.' 'God anointed Jesus.' Now, how singular and inexplicable is this phraseology, which fills the New Testament, if this title belong equally to Jesus, and if a principal object of this book is to reveal him as God, as partaking equally with the Father in supreme divinity! We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the New Testament, where the word God means three persons, where it is not limited to one person, and where, unless turned from its usual sense by the connexion, it does not mean the Father. Can stronger proof be given, that the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead is not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity?

This doctrine, were it true, must, from its difficulty, singularity, and importance, have been laid down with

great clearness, guarded with great care, and stated with all possible precision. But where does this statement appear? From the many passages which treat of God, we ask for one, one only, in which we are told, that he is a threefold being, or, that he is three persons, or that he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. On the contrary, in the New Testament, where, at least, we might expect many express assertions of this nature, God is declared to be one, without the least attempt to prevent the acceptation of the words in their common sense; and he is always spoken of and addressed in the singular number, that is, in language which was universally understood to intend a single person, and to which no other idea could have been attached, without an express admonition. So entirely do the Scriptures abstain from stating the trinity, that when our opponents would insert it into their creeds and doxologies, they are compelled to leave the bible, and to invent forms of words altogether unsanctioned by scriptural phraseology. That a doctrine so strange, so liable to misapprehension, so fundamental as this is said to be, and requiring such careful exposition, should be left so undefined and unprotected, to be made out by inference, and to be hunted through distant and detached parts of scripture, this is a difficulty, which, we think, no ingenuity can explain.

We have another difficulty. Christianity, it must be remembered, was planted and grew up amidst sharp-sighted enemies, who overlooked no objectionable part of the system, and who must have fastened with great earnestness on a doctrine involving such apparent contradictions as the trinity. We cannot conceive an opinion, against which the Jews, who prided themselves on an ad-

herence to God's unity, would have raised an equal clamor. Now, how happens it, that in the apostolic writings, which relate so much to objections against Christianity, and to the controversies which grew out of this religion, not one word is said, implying that objections were brought against the gospel from the doctrine of the trinity, not one word is uttered in its defence and explanation, not a word to rescue it from reproach and mistake? This argument has almost the force of demonstration. We are persuaded, that had three divine persons been announced by the first preachers of Christianity, all equal, and all infinite, one of whom was the very Jesus, who had lately died on a cross, this peculiarity of Christianity would have almost absorbed every other, and the great labor of the apostles would have been to repel the continual assaults, which it would have awakened. But the fact is, that not a whisper of objection to Christianity, on that account, reaches our ears from the apostolic age. In the epistles we see not a trace of controversy called forth by the trinity.

We have further objections to this doctrine, drawn from its practical influence. We regard it as unfavorable to devotion, by dividing and distracting the mind in its communion with God. It is a great excellence of the doctrine of God's unity, that it offers to us ONE OBJECT of supreme homage, adoration and love, One Infinite Father, one Being of beings, one original and fountain, to whom we may refer all good, in whom all our powers and affections may be concentrated, and whose lovely and venerable nature may pervade all our thoughts. True piety, when directed to an undivided Deity, has a chasteness, a singleness, most favorable to religious awe and

love. Now the trinity sets before us three distinct objects of supreme adoration; three infinite persons, having equal claims on our hearts; three divine agents, performing different offices, and to be acknowledged and worshipped in different relations. And is it possible, we ask, that the weak and limited mind of man can attach itself to these with the same power and joy, as to One Infinite Father, the only First Cause, in whom all the blessings of nature and redemption meet as their centre and source? Must not devotion be distracted by the equal and rival claims of three equal persons, and must not the worship of the conscientious, consistent Christian be disturbed by an apprehension, lest he withhold from one or another of these, his due proportion of homage?

We also think, that the doctrine of the trinity injures devotion, not only by joining to the Father other objects of worship, but by taking from the Father the supreme affection, which is his due, and transferring it to the Son. This is a most important view. That Jesus Christ, if exalted into the infinite Divinity, should be more interesting than the Father, is precisely what might be expected from history, and from the principles of human nature. Men want an object of worship like themselves, and the great secret of idolatry lies in this propensity. A God, clothed in our form, and feeling our wants and sorrows, speaks to our weak nature more strongly, than a Father in heaven, a pure spirit, invisible, and unapproachable, save by the reflecting and purified mind.—We think too, that the peculiar offices ascribed to Jesus by the popular theology, make him the most attractive person in the Godhead. The Father is the depositary of the Justice, the vindicator of the rights, the avenger

of the laws of the Divinity. On the other hand, the Son, the brightness of the divine mercy, stands between the incensed Deity and guilty humanity, exposes his meek head to the storms, and his compassionate breast to the sword of the divine justice, bears our whole load of punishment, and purchases with his blood every blessing which descends from heaven. Need we state the effect of these representations, especially on common minds, for whom Christianity was chiefly designed, and whom it seeks to bring to the Father as the loveliest being? We do believe, that the worship of a bleeding, suffering God, tends strongly to absorb the mind, and to draw it from other objects, just as the human tenderness of the Virgin Mary has given her so conspicuous a place in the devotions of the church of Rome. We believe too, that this worship, though attractive, is not most fitted to spiritualize the mind, that it awakens human transport, rather than that deep veneration of the moral perfections of God, which is the essence of piety.

2. Having thus given our views of the unity of God, I proceed in the second place to observe, that we believe in the unity of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God. We complain of the doctrine of the trinity, that not satisfied with making God three beings, it makes Jesus Christ two beings, and thus introduces infinite confusion into our conceptions of his character. This corruption of Christianity, alike repugnant to common sense, and to the general strain of scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth of Jesus.

According to this doctrine, Jesus Christ, instead of being one mind, one conscious intelligent principle, whom we can understand, consists of two souls, two minds; the one divine, the other human; the one weak, the other almighty; the one ignorant, the other omniscient. Now we maintain, that this is to make Christ two beings. To denominate him one person, one being, and yet to suppose him made up of two minds, infinitely different from each other, is to abuse and confound language, and to throw darkness over all our conceptions of intelligent natures. According to the common doctrine, each of these two minds in Christ has its own consciousness, its own will, its own perceptions. They have in fact no common properties. The divine mind feels none of the wants and sorrows of the human, and the human is infinitely removed from the perfection and happiness of the divine. Can you conceive of two beings in the universe more distinct? We have always thought that one person was constituted and distinguished by one consciousness. The doctrine, that one and the same person should have two consciousnesses, two wills, two souls, infinitely different from each other, this we think an enormous tax on human credulity.

We say, that if a doctrine, so strange, so difficult, so remote from all the previous conceptions of men, be indeed a part and an essential part of revelation, it must be taught with great distinctness, and we ask our brethren to point to some plain, direct passage, where Christ is said to be composed of two minds infinitely different, yet constituting one person. We find none. Other Christians, indeed, tell us, that this doctrine is necessary to the harmony of the Scriptures, that some texts as-

cribe to Jesus Christ human, and others divine properties, and that to reconcile these, we must suppose two minds, to which these properties may be referred. In other words, for the purpose of reconciling certain difficult passages, which a just criticism can in a great degree, if not wholly, explain, we must invent an hypothesis vastly more difficult, and involving gross absurdity. We are to find our way out of a labyrinth, by a clue, which conducts us into mazes infinitely more inextricable.

Surely if Jesus Christ felt that he consisted of two minds, and that this was a leading feature of his religion, his phraseology respecting himself would have been colored by this peculiarity. The universal language of men is framed upon the idea, that one person is one person, is one mind, and one soul; and when the multitude heard this language from the lips of Jesus, they must have taken it in its usual sense, and must have referred to a single soul all which he spoke, unless expressly instructed to interpret it differently. But where do we find this instruction? Where do you meet, in the New Testament, the phraseology which abounds in Trinitarian books, and which necessarily grows from the doctrine of two natures in Jesus? Where does this divine teacher say, 'This I speak as God, and this as man; this is true only of my human mind, this only of my divine?' Where do we find in the Epistles a trace of this strange phraseology? Nowhere. It was not needed in that day. It was demanded by the errors of a later age.

We believe, then, that Christ is one mind, one being, and, I add, a being distinct from the one God. That Christ is not the one God, not the same being with the

Father, is a necessary inference from our former head, in which we saw that the doctrine of three persons in God is a fiction. But on so important a subject, I would add a few remarks. We wish, that those from whom we differ, would weigh one striking fact. Jesus, in his preaching, continually spoke of God. The word was always in his mouth. We ask, does he, by this word, ever mean himself? We say, never. On the contrary, he most plainly distinguishes between God and himself, and so do his disciples. How this is to be reconciled with the idea, that the manifestation of Christ, as God, was a primary object of Christianity, our adversaries must determine.

If we examine the passages in which Jesus is distinguished from God, we shall see, that they not only speak of him as another being, but seem to labor to express his inferiority. He is continually spoken of as the Son of God, sent of God, receiving all his powers from God, working miracles because God was with him, judging justly because God taught him, having claims on our belief, because he was anointed and sealed by God, and as able of himself to do nothing. The New Testament is filled with this language. Now, we ask, what impression this language was fitted and intended to make? Could any, who heard it, have imagined, that Jesus was the very God, to whom he was so industriously declared to be inferior; the very being, by whom he was sent, and from whom he professed to have received his message and power? Let it here be remembered, that the human birth, and bodily form, and humble circumstances, and mortal sufferings of Jesus, must all have prepared men to interpret, in the most unqualified manner, the language

in which his inferiority to God was declared. Why then was this language used so continually, and without limitation, if Jesus were the Supreme Deity, and if this truth were an essential part of his religion? I repeat it, the human condition and sufferings of Christ, tended strongly to exclude from men's minds the idea of his proper Godhead; and of course, we should expect to find in the New Testament perpetual care and effort to counteract this tendency, to hold him forth as the same being with his Father, if this doctrine were, as is pretended, the soul and centre of his religion. We should expect to find the phraseology of scripture cast into the mould of this doctrine, to hear familiarly of God the Son, of our Lord God Jesus, and to be told, that to us there is one God, even Jesus. But instead of this, the inferiority of Christ pervades the New Testament. It is not only implied in the general phraseology, but repeatedly and decidedly expressed, and unaccompanied with any admonition to prevent its application to his whole nature. Could it then have been the great design of the sacred writers, to exhibit Jesus as the Supreme God?

I am aware that these remarks will be met by two or three texts, in which Christ is called God, and by a class of passages, not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him. To these we offer one plain answer. We say that it is one of the most established and obvious principles of criticism, that language is to be explained according to the known properties of the subject to which it is applied. Every man knows, that the same words convey very different ideas, when used in relation to different beings. Thus Solomon *built* the temple in a different manner from the ar-

chitect whom he employed; and God *repents* differently from man. Now, we maintain, that the known properties and circumstances of Christ, his birth, sufferings and death, his constant habit of speaking of God as a distinct being from himself, his praying to God, his ascribing to God all his power and offices, these acknowledged properties of Christ, we say, oblige us to interpret the comparatively few passages, which are thought to make him the Supreme God, in a manner consistent with his distinct and inferior nature. It is our duty to explain such texts, by the rule which we apply to other texts, in which human beings are called Gods, and are said to be partakers of the divine nature, to know and possess all things, and to be filled with all God's fulness. These latter passages we do not hesitate to modify, and restrain, and turn from the most obvious sense, because this sense is opposed to the known properties of the beings to whom they relate; and we maintain, that we adhere to the same principle, and use no greater latitude, in explaining, as we do, the passages which are thought to support the Godhead of Christ.

Trinitarians profess to derive some important advantages from their mode of viewing Christ. It furnishes them, they tell us, with an infinite atonement, for it shows them an infinite being, suffering for their sins. The confidence with which this fallacy is repeated astonishes us. When pressed with the question, whether they really believe, that the infinite and unchangeable God suffered and died on the cross, they acknowledge that this is not true, but that Christ's human mind alone sustained the pains of death. How have we then an infinite sufferer? This language seems to us an imposition on common

minds, and very derogatory to God's justice, as if this attribute could be satisfied by a sophism and a fiction.

We are also told, that Christ is a more interesting object, that his love and mercy are more felt, when he is viewed as the Supreme God, who left his glory to take humanity and to suffer for men. That Trinitarians are strongly moved by this representation, we do not mean to deny; but we think their emotions altogether founded on a misapprehension of their own doctrines. They talk of the second person of the trinity's leaving his glory and his Father's bosom, to visit and save the world. But this second person, being the unchangeable and infinite God, was evidently incapable of parting with the least degree of his perfection and felicity. At the moment of his taking flesh, he was as intimately present with his Father as before, and equally with his Father filled heaven, and earth, and immensity. This Trinitarians acknowledge; and still they profess to be touched and overwhelmed by the amazing humiliation of this immutable being! But not only does their doctrine, when fully explained, reduce Christ's humiliation to a fiction, it almost wholly destroys the impressions with which his cross ought to be viewed. According to their doctrine, Christ was, comparatively, no sufferer at all. It is true, his human mind suffered; but this, they tell us, was an infinitely small part of Jesus, bearing no more proportion to his whole nature, than a single hair of our heads to the whole body, or than a drop to the ocean. The divine mind of Christ, that which was most properly himself, was infinitely happy, at the very moment of the suffering of his humanity. Whilst hanging on the cross, he was the happiest being in the universe, as happy as the infinite Father;

so that his pains, compared with his felicity, were nothing. This Trinitarians do, and must acknowledge. It follows necessarily from the immutableness of the divine nature, which they ascribe to Christ; so that their system, justly viewed, robs his death of interest, weakens our sympathy with his sufferings, and is, of all others, most unfavorable to a love of Christ, founded on a sense of his sacrifices for mankind. We esteem our own views to be vastly more affecting. It is our belief, that Christ's humiliation was real and entire, that the whole Saviour, and not a part of him, suffered, that his crucifixion was a scene of deep and unmixed agony. As we stand round his cross, our minds are not distracted, nor our sensibility weakened, by contemplating him as composed of incongruous and infinitely differing minds, and as having a balance of infinite felicity. We recognise in the dying Jesus but one mind. This, we think, renders his sufferings, and his patience and love in bearing them, incomparably more impressive and affecting, than the system we oppose.

2. Having thus given our belief on two great points, namely, that there is one God, and that Jesus Christ is a being distinct from, and inferior to God, I now proceed to another point on which we lay still greater stress. We believe in the *moral perfection of God.* We consider no part of theology so important as that which treats of God's moral character; and we value our views of Christianity chiefly, as they assert his amiable and venerable attributes.

It may be said, that in regard to this subject, all Christians agree, that all ascribe to the Supreme Being, infinite justice, goodness, and holiness. We reply, that it is

very possible to speak of God magnificently, and to think of him meanly; to apply to his person high-sounding epithets, and to his government, principles which make him odious. The Heathens called Jupiter the greatest and the best; but his history was black with cruelty and lust. We cannot judge of men's real ideas of God, by their general language, for in all ages, they have hoped to soothe the Deity by adulation. We must inquire into their particular views of his purposes, of the principles of his administration, and of his disposition towards his creatures.

We conceive that Christians have generally leaned towards a very injurious view of the Supreme Being. They have too often felt, as if he were raised, by his greatness and sovereignty, above the principles of morality, above those eternal laws of equity and rectitude, to which all other beings are subjected. We believe, that in no being is the sense of right so strong, so omnipotent, as in God. We believe that his almighty power is entirely submitted to his perceptions of rectitude; and this is the ground of our piety. It is not because he is our Creator merely, but because he created us for good and holy purposes; it is not because his will is irresistible, but because his will is the perfection of virtue, that we pay him allegiance. We cannot bow before a being, however great and powerful, who governs tyrannically. We respect nothing but excellence, whether on earth, or in heaven. We venerate not the loftiness of God's throne, but the equity and goodness in which it is established.

We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words; good in disposition, as well as in act; good, not to a few, but to all; good to every individual, as well as to the general system.

We believe, too, that God is just; but we never forget, that his justice is the justice of a good being, dwelling in the same mind, and acting in harmony, with perfect benevolence. By this attribute, we understand God's infinite regard to virtue or moral worth, expressed in a moral government; that is, in giving excellent and equitable laws, and in conferring such rewards, and inflicting such punishments, as are best fitted to secure their observance. God's justice has for its end the highest virtue of the creation, and it punishes for this end alone, and thus it coincides with benevolence; for virtue and happiness, though not the same, are inseparably conjoined.

God's justice thus viewed, appears to us to be in perfect harmony with his mercy. According to the prevalent systems of theology, these attributes are so discordant and jarring, that to reconcile them is the hardest task, and the most wonderful achievement, of infinite wisdom. To us they seem to be intimate friends, always at peace, breathing the same spirit, and seeking the same end. By God's mercy, we understand not a blind instinctive compassion, which forgives without reflection, and without regard to the interests of virtue. This, we acknowledge, would be incompatible with justice, and also with enlightened benevolence. God's mercy, as we understand it, desires strongly the happiness of the guilty, but only through their penitence. It has a regard to character as truly as his justice. It defers punishment, and suffers long, that the sinner may return to his duty, but leaves the impenitent and unyielding, to the fearful retribution threatened in God's word.

To give our views of God, in one word, we believe in

his Parental character. We ascribe to him, not only the name, but the dispositions and principles of a father. We believe that he has a father's concern for his creatures, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's joy in their progress, a father's readiness to receive the penitent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible. We look upon this world as a place of education, in which he is training men by prosperity and adversity, by aids and obstructions, by conflicts of reason and passion, by motives to duty and temptations to sin, by a various discipline suited to free and moral beings, for union with himself, and for a sublime and ever growing virtue in heaven.

Now we object to the systems of religion, which prevail among us, that they are adverse, in a greater or less degree, to these purifying, comforting, and honorable views of God, that they take from us our father in heaven, and substitute for him a being, whom we cannot love if we would, and whom we ought not to love if we could. We object, particularly on this ground, to that system, which arrogates to itself the name of Orthodoxy, and which is now industriously propagated through our country. This system indeed takes various shapes, but in all it casts dishonor on the Creator. According to its old and genuine form, it teaches, that God brings us into life wholly depraved, so that under the innocent features of our childhood, is hidden a nature averse to all good, and propense to all evil, a nature, which exposes us to God's displeasure and wrath, even before we have acquired power to understand our duties, or to reflect upon

our actions. According to a more modern exposition, it teaches, that we came from the hands of our Maker with such a constitution and are placed under such influences and circumstances, as to render certain and infallible the total depravity of every human being, from the first moment of his moral agency; and it also teaches, that the offence of the child, who brings into life this ceaseless tendency to unmingled crime, exposes him to the sentence of everlasting damnation. Now, according to the plainest principles of morality, we maintain, that a natural constitution of the mind, unfailingly disposing it to evil and to evil alone, would absolve it from guilt; that to give existence under this condition would argue unspeakable cruelty, and that to punish the sin of this unhappily constituted child with endless ruin, would be a wrong unparalleled by the most merciless despotism.

This system also teaches, that God selects from this corrupt mass a number to be saved, and plucks them, by a special influence, from the common ruin; that the rest of mankind, though left without that special grace which their conversion requires, are commanded to repent under penalty of aggravated wo; and that forgiveness is promised them on terms, which their very constitution infallibly disposes them to reject, and in rejecting which they awfully enhance the punishments of hell. These proffers of forgiveness and exhortations of amendment, to beings born under a blighting curse, fill our minds with a horror, which we want words to express.

That this religious system does not produce all the effects on character, which might be anticipated, we most joyfully admit. It is often, very often, counteracted by nature, conscience, common sense, by the general strain

of scripture, by the mild example and precepts of Christ, and by the many positive declarations of God's universal kindness, and perfect equity. But still we think that we see its unhappy influence. It tends to discourage the timid, to give excuses to the bad, to feed the vanity of the fanatical, and to offer shelter to the bad feelings of the malignant. By shocking, as it does, the fundamental principles of morality, and by exhibiting a severe and partial Deity, it tends strongly to pervert the moral faculty, to form a gloomy, forbidding, and servile religion, and to lead men to substitute censoriousness, bitterness, and persecution, for a tender and impartial charity. We think, too, that this system, which begins with degrading human nature, may be expected to end in pride; for pride grows out of a consciousness of high distinctions, however obtained, and no distinction is so great as that, which is made between the elected and abandoned of God.

The false and dishonorable views of God, which have now been stated, we feel ourselves bound to resist unceasingly. Other errors we can pass over with comparative indifference. But we ask our opponents to leave to us a God, worthy of our love and trust, in whom our moral sentiments may delight, in whom our weaknesses and sorrows may find refuge. We cling to the divine perfections. We meet them everywhere in creation, we read them in the scriptures, we see a lovely image of them in Jesus Christ; and gratitude, love and veneration call on us to assert them. Reproached, as we often are, by men, it is our consolation and happiness, that one of our chief offences is the zeal with which we vindicate the dishonored goodness and rectitude of God.

4. Having thus spoken of the unity of God; of the unity of Jesus, and his inferiority to God; and of the perfections of the divine character; I now proceed to give our views of the mediation of Christ and of the purposes of his mission. With regard to the great object, which Jesus came to accomplish, there seems to be no possibility of mistake. We believe, that he was sent by the Father to effect a moral, or spiritual deliverance of mankind; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity and happiness. We believe, too, that he accomplishes this sublime purpose by a variety of methods; by his instructions respecting God's unity, parental character, and moral government, which are admirably fitted to reclaim the world from idolatry and impiety, to the knowledge, love, and obedience of the Creator; by his promises of pardon to the penitent, and of divine assistance to those, who labor for progress in moral excellence; by the light which he has thrown on the path of duty; by his own spotless example, in which the loveliness and sublimity of virtue shine forth to warm and quicken, as well as guide us to perfection; by his threatenings against incorrigible guilt; by his glorious discoveries of immortality; by his sufferings and death; by that signal event, the resurrection, which powerfully bore witness to his divine mission, and brought down to men's senses a future life; by his continual intercession, which obtains for us spiritual aid and blessings; and by the power with which he is invested, of raising the dead, judging the world, and conferring the everlasting rewards promised to the faithful.

We have no desire to conceal the fact, that a difference of opinion exists among us, in regard to an interesting part of Christ's mediation; I mean, in regard to the precise influence of his death, on our forgiveness. Many suppose, that this event contributes to our pardon, as it was a principal means of confirming his religion, and of giving it a power over the mind; in other words, that it procures forgiveness by leading to that repentance and virtue, which is the great and only condition on which forgiveness is bestowed. Many of us are dissatisfied with this explanation, and think that the scriptures ascribe the remission of sins to Christ's death, with an emphasis so peculiar, that we ought to consider this event as having a special influence in removing punishment, though the scriptures may not reveal the way, in which it contributes to this end.

Whilst, however, we differ in explaining the connexion between Christ's death and human forgiveness, a connexion which we all gratefully acknowledge, we agree in rejecting many sentiments, which prevail in regard to his mediation. The idea, which is conveyed to common minds by the popular system, that Christ's death has an influence in making God placable or merciful, in awakening his kindness towards men, we reject with strong disapprobation. We are happy to find, that this very dishonorable notion is disowned by intelligent Christians of that class from which we differ. We recollect, however, that not long ago, it was common to hear of Christ, as having died to appease God's wrath, and to pay the debt of sinners to his inflexible justice; and we have a strong persuasion, that the language of popular religious books, and the common mode of stating the doctrine of

Christ's mediation, still communicate very degrading views of God's character. They give to multitudes the impression, that the death of Jesus produces a change in the mind of God towards man, and that in this its efficacy chiefly consists. No error seems to us more pernicious. We can endure no shade over the pure goodness of God. We earnestly maintain, that Jesus, instead of calling forth in any way or degree, the mercy of the Father, was sent by that mercy, to be our Saviour; that he is nothing to the human race, but what he is by God's appointment; that he communicates nothing but what God empowers him to bestow; that our Father in heaven is originally, essentially and eternally placable, and disposed to forgive; and that his unborrowed, underived, and unchangeable love, is the only fountain of what flows to us through his Son. We conceive, that Jesus is dishonored, not glorified, by ascribing to him an influence, which clouds the splendor of divine benevolence.

We farther agree in rejecting, as unscriptural and absurd, the explanation given by the popular system, of the manner in which Christ's death procures forgiveness for men. This system used to teach as its fundamental principle, that man, having sinned against an infinite being, has contracted infinite guilt, and is consequently exposed to an infinite penalty. We believe however, that this reasoning, if reasoning it may be called, which overlooks the obvious maxim, that the guilt of a being must be proportioned to his nature and powers, has fallen into disuse. Still the system teaches, that sin, of whatever degree, exposes to endless punishment, and that the whole human race, being infallibly involved by their nature in sin, owe this awful penalty to the justice of their Creator. It

teaches, that this penalty cannot be remitted, in consistency with the honor of the divine law, unless a substitute be found to endure it or to suffer an equivalent. It also teaches, that, from the nature of the case, no substitute is adequate to this work, save the infinite God himself; and accordingly, God, in his second person, took on him human nature, that he might pay to his own justice, the debt of punishment incurred by men, and might thus reconcile forgiveness with the claims and threatenings of his law. Such is the prevalent system. Now, to us, this doctrine seems to carry on its front, strong marks of absurdity, and we maintain that Christianity ought not to be encumbered with it, unless it be laid down in the New Testament fully and expressly. We ask our adversaries, then, to point to some plain passages where it is taught. We ask for one text, in which we are told that God took human nature, that he might make an infinite satisfaction to his own justice; for one text, which tells us, that human guilt requires an infinite substitute; that Christ's sufferings owe their efficacy to their being borne by an infinite being; or that his divine nature gives infinite value to the sufferings of the human. Not *one word* of this description can we find in the scriptures; not a text, which even hints at these strange doctrines. They are altogether, we believe, the fictions of theologians. Christianity is in no degree responsible for them. We are astonished at their prevalence. What can be plainer, than that God cannot, in any sense, be a sufferer, or bear a penalty in the room of his creatures? How dishonorable to him is the supposition, that his justice is now so severe, as to exact infinite punishment for the sins of frail and feeble men, and now so easy and yield-

ing, as to accept the limited pains of Christ's human soul, as a full equivalent for the endless woes due from the world? How plain is it also, according to this doctrine, that God, instead of being plenteous in forgiveness, never forgives; for it seems absurd to speak of men as forgiven, when their whole punishment, or an equivalent to it, is borne by a substitute? A scheme more fitted to obscure the brightness of Christianity and the mercy of God, or less suited to give comfort to a guilty and troubled mind, could not, we think, be easily framed.

We believe too, that this system is unfavorable to the character. It naturally leads men to think, that Christ came to change God's mind, rather than their own; that the highest object of his mission, was to avert punishment, rather than to communicate holiness; and that a large part of religion consists in disparaging good works and human virtue, for the purpose of magnifying the value of Christ's vicarious sufferings. In this way, a sense of the infinite importance and indispensable necessity of personal improvement is weakened, and high sounding praises of Christ's cross seem often to be substituted for obedience to his precepts. For ourselves, we have not so learned Jesus. Whilst we gratefully acknowledge, that he came to rescue us from punishment, we believe, that he was sent on a still nobler errand, namely, to deliver us from sin itself, and to form us to a sublime and heavenly virtue. We regard him as a Saviour, chiefly as he is the light, physician, and guide of the dark, diseased, and wandering mind. No influence in the universe seems to us so glorious, as that over the character; and no redemption so worthy of thankfulness, as the restoration of the soul to purity. Without this, pardon, were it

possible, would be of little value. Why pluck the sinner from hell, if a hell be left to burn in his own breast? Why raise him to heaven, if he remain a stranger to its sanctity and love? With these impressions, we are accustomed to value the gospel chiefly, as it abounds in effectual aids, motives, excitements to a generous and divine virtue. In this virtue, as in a common centre, we see all its doctrines, precepts, promises meet; and we believe, that faith in this religion is of no worth, and contributes nothing to salvation, any farther than as it uses these doctrines, precepts, promises, and the whole life, character, sufferings, and triumphs of Jesus, as the means of purifying the mind, of changing it into the likeness of his celestial excellence.

5. Having thus stated our views of the highest object of Christ's mission, that it is the recovery of men to virtue, or holiness, I shall now, in the last place, give our views of the nature of christian virtue, or true holiness. We believe that all virtue has its foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of forming his temper and life according to conscience. We believe that these moral faculties are the grounds of responsibility, and the highest distinctions of human nature, and that no act is praiseworthy, any farther than it springs from their exertion. We believe, that no dispositions infused into us without our own moral activity, are of the nature of virtue, and therefore, we reject the doctrine of irresistible divine influence on the human mind, moulding it into goodness, as marble is hewn into a statue. Such goodness, if this word may be used, would not be the object of moral ap-

probation, any more than the instinctive affections of inferior animals, or the constitutional amiableness of human beings.

By these remarks, we do not mean to deny the importance of God's aid or Spirit; but by his Spirit, we mean a moral, illuminating, and persuasive influence, not physical, not compulsory, not involving a necessity of virtue. We object, strongly, to the idea of many Christians respecting man's impotence and God's irresistible agency on the heart, believing that they subvert our responsibility and the laws of our moral nature, that they make men machines, that they cast on God the blame of all evil deeds, that they discourage good minds, and inflate the fanatical with wild conceits of immediate and sensible inspiration.

Among the virtues, we give the first place to the love of God. We believe, that this principle is the true end and happiness of our being, that we were made for union with our Creator, that his infinite perfection is the only sufficient object and true resting place for the insatiable desires and unlimited capacities of the human mind, and that without him, our noblest sentiments, admiration, veneration, hope, and love, would wither and decay. We believe, too, that the love of God is not only essential to happiness, but to the strength and perfection of all the virtues; that conscience, without the sanction of God's authority and retributive justice, would be a weak director; that benevolence, unless nourished by communion with his goodness, and encouraged by his smile, could not thrive amidst the selfishness and thanklessness of the world; and that self-government, without a sense of the divine inspection, would hardly extend beyond an out-

ward and partial purity. God, as he is essentially goodness, holiness, justice, and virtue, so he is the life, motive and sustainer of virtue in the human soul.

But whilst we earnestly inculcate the love of God, we believe that great care is necessary to distinguish it from counterfeits. We think that much, which is called piety, is worthless. Many have fallen into the error, that there can be no excess in feelings, which have God for their object; and, distrusting as coldness that self-possession, without which virtue and devotion lose all their dignity, they have abandoned themselves to extravagances, which have brought contempt on piety. Most certainly, if the love of God be that, which often bears its name, the less we have of it, the better. If religion be the shipwreck of understanding, we cannot keep too far from it. On this subject, we always speak plainly. We cannot sacrifice our reason to the reputation of zeal. We owe it to truth and religion, to maintain, that fanaticism, partial insanity, sudden impressions, and ungovernable transports, are anything, rather than piety.

We conceive, that the true love of God is a moral sentiment, founded on a clear perception, and consisting in a high esteem and veneration, of his moral perfections. Thus, it perfectly coincides, and is in fact the same thing, with the love of virtue, rectitude, and goodness. You will easily judge then, what we esteem the surest and only decisive signs of piety. We lay no stress on strong excitements. We esteem him, and him only a pious man, who practically conforms to God's moral perfections and government; who shows his delight in God's benevolence, by loving and serving his neighbor; his delight in God's justice, by being resolutely upright; his sense

of God's purity, by regulating his thoughts, imagination, and desires; and whose conversation, business, and domestic life are swayed by a regard to God's presence and authority. In all things else men may deceive themselves. Disordered nerves may give them strange sights, and sounds, and impressions. Texts of scripture may come to them as from heaven. Their whole souls may be moved, and their confidence in God's favor be undoubting. But in all this there is no religion. The question is, do they love God's commands, in which his character is fully expressed, and give up to these their habits and passions? Without this, ecstasy is a mockery. One surrender of desire to God's will, is worth a thousand transports. We do not judge of the bent of men's minds by their raptures, any more than we judge of the natural direction of a tree, during a storm. We rather suspect loud profession, for we have observed, that deep feeling is generally noiseless, and least seeks display.

We would not, by these remarks, be understood as wishing to exclude from religion warmth, and even transport. We honor, and highly value true religious sensibility. We believe, that Christianity is intended to act powerfully on our whole nature, on the heart, as well as the understanding and the conscience. We conceive of heaven as a state, where the love of God will be exalted into an unbounded fervor and joy; and we desire, in our pilgrimage here, to drink into the spirit of that better world. But we think, that religious warmth is only to be valued, when it springs naturally from an improved character, when it comes unforced, when it is the recompense of obedience, when it is the warmth of a mind which understands God by being like him, and when, instead

of disordering, it exalts the understanding, invigorates conscience, gives a pleasure to common duties, and is seen to exist in connexion with cheerfulness, judiciousness, and a reasonable frame of mind. When we observe a fervor, called religious, in men whose general character expresses little refinement and elevation, and whose piety seems at war with reason, we pay it little respect. We honor religion too much to give its sacred name to a feverish, forced, fluctuating zeal, which has little power over the life.

Another important branch of virtue, we believe to be love to Christ. The greatness of the work of Jesus, the spirit with which he executed it, and the sufferings which he bore for our salvation, we feel to be strong claims on our gratitude and veneration. We see in nature no beauty to be compared with the loveliness of his character, nor do we find on earth a benefactor, to whom we owe an equal debt. We read his history with delight, and learn from it the perfection of our nature. We are particularly touched by his death, which was endured for our redemption, and by that strength of charity, which triumphed over his pains. His resurrection is the foundation of our hope of immortality. His intercession gives us boldness to draw nigh to the throne of grace, and we look up to heaven with new desire, when we think, that if we follow him here, we shall there see his benignant countenance and enjoy his friendship forever.

I need not express to you our views on the subject of the benevolent virtues. We attach such importance to these, that we are sometimes reproached with exalting them above piety. We regard the spirit of love, charity, meekness, forgiveness, liberality, and beneficence, as the

badge and distinction of Christians, as the brightest image we can bear of God, as the best proof of piety. On this subject, I need not, and cannot enlarge; but there is one branch of benevolence, which I ought not to pass over in silence, because we think that we conceive of it more highly and justly, than many of our brethren. I refer to the duty of candor, charitable judgment, especially towards those who differ in religious opinion. We think, that in nothing have Christians so widely departed from their religion, as in this particular. We read with astonishment and horror, the history of the church; and sometimes when we look back on the fires of persecution, and on the zeal of Christians, in building up walls of separation, and in giving up one another to perdition, we feel as if we were reading the records of an infernal, rather than a heavenly kingdom. An enemy to every religion, if asked to describe a Christian, would, with some show of reason, depict him as an idolater of his own distinguishing opinions, covered with badges of party, shutting his eyes on the virtues and his ears on the arguments of his opponents, arrogating all excellence to his own sect and all saving power to his own creed, sheltering under the name of pious zeal the love of domination, the conceit of infallibility, and the spirit of intolerance, and trampling on men's rights under the pretence of saving their souls.

We can hardly conceive of a plainer obligation on beings of our frail and fallible nature, who are instructed in the duty of candid judgment, than to abstain from condemning men of apparent conscientiousness and sincerity, who are chargeable with no crime but that of differing from us in the interpretation of the scriptures, and

differing, too, on topics of great and acknowledged obscurity. We are astonished at the hardihood of those, who, with Christ's warnings sounding in their ears, take on them the responsibility of making creeds for his church, and cast out professors of virtuous lives for imagined errors, for the guilt of thinking for themselves. We know that zeal for truth, is the cover for this usurpation of Christ's prerogative; but we think that zeal for truth, as it is called, is very suspicious, except in men, whose capacities and advantages, whose patient deliberation, and whose improvements in humility, mildness, and candor, give them a right to hope, that their views are more just than those of their neighbors. Much of what passes for a zeal for truth, we look upon with little respect, for it often appears to thrive most luxuriantly where other virtues shoot up thinly and feebly; and we have no gratitude for those reformers, who would force upon us a doctrine, which has not sweetened their own tempers, or made them better men than their neighbors.

We are accustomed to think much of the difficulties attending religious inquiries; difficulties springing from the slow developement of our minds, from the power of early impressions, from the state of society, from human authority, from the general neglect of the reasoning powers, from the want of just principles of criticism and of important helps in interpreting scripture, and from various other causes. We find, that on no subject have men, and even good men, engrafted so many strange conceits, wild theories, and fictions of fancy, as on religion; and remembering, as we do, that we ourselves are sharers of the common frailty, we dare not assume infallibility in the treatment of our fellow Christians, or encourage in

common Christians, who have little time for investigation, the habit of denouncing and contemning other denominations, perhaps more enlightened and virtuous than their own. Charity, forbearance, a delight in the virtues of different sects, a backwardness to censure and condemn, these are virtues, which, however poorly practised by us, we admire and recommend, and we would rather join ourselves to the church in which they abound, than to any other communion, however elated with the belief of its own orthodoxy, however strict in guarding its creed, however burning with zeal against imagined error.

I have thus given the distinguishing views of those Christians in whose names I have spoken. We have embraced this system, not hastily or lightly, but after much deliberation, and we hold it fast, not merely because we believe it to be true, but because we regard it as purifying truth, as a doctrine according to godliness, as able to "work mightily" and to "bring forth fruit" in them who believe. That we wish to spread it, we have no desire to conceal; but we think, that we wish its diffusion, because we regard it as more friendly to practical piety and pure morals, than the opposite doctrines, because it gives clearer and nobler views of duty, and stronger motives to its performance, because it recommends religion at once to the understanding and the heart, because it asserts the lovely and venerable attributes of God, because it tends to restore the benevolent spirit of Jesus to his divided and afflicted church, and because it cuts off every hope of God's favor, except that which springs from practical conformity to the life and precepts of Christ. We see nothing in our views to give offence, save their purity, and it is their purity, which makes us seek and hope their extension through the world.

My friend and brother; — You are this day to take upon you important duties; to be clothed with an office, which the Son of God did not disdain; to devote yourself to that religion, which the most hallowed lips have preached, and the most precious blood sealed. We trust that you will bring to this work a willing mind, a firm purpose, a martyr's spirit, a readiness to toil and suffer for the truth, a devotion of your best powers to the interests of piety and virtue. I have spoken of the doctrines, which you will probably preach; but I do not mean, that you are to give yourself to controversy. You will remember, that good practice is the end of preaching, and will labor to make your people holy livers, rather than skilful disputants. Be careful, lest the desire of defending what you deem truth, and of repelling reproach and misrepresentation, turn you aside from your great business, which is to fix in men's minds a living conviction of the obligation, sublimity and happiness of Christian virtue. The best way to vindicate your sentiments, is to show, in your preaching and life, their intimate connexion with Christian morals, with a high and delicate sense of duty, with candor towards your opposers, with inflexible integrity, and with an habitual reverence for God. If any light can pierce and scatter the clouds of prejudice, it is that of a pure example. My brother, may your life preach more loudly than your lips. Be to this people a pattern of all good works, and may your instructions derive authority from a well grounded belief in your hearers, that you speak from the heart, that you preach from experience, that the truth which you dispense has wrought powerfully in your own heart, that God, and Jesus, and heaven are not merely words on your lips, but

most affecting realities to your mind, and springs of hope and consolation, and strength, in all your trials. Thus laboring, may you reap abundantly, and have a testimony of your faithfulness, not only in your own conscience, but in the esteem, love, virtues, and improvements of your people.

To all who hear me, I would say, with the apostle; Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Do not, brethren, shrink from the duty of searching God's word for yourselves through fear of human censure and denunciation. Do not think that you may innocently follow the opinions which prevail around you, without investigation, on the ground, that Christianity is now so purified from errors, as to need no laborious research. There is much reason to believe, that Christianity is at this moment dishonored by gross and cherished corruptions. If you remember the darkness, which hung over the gospel for ages; if you consider the impure union, which still subsists in almost every christian country between the church, and the state, and which enlists men's selfishness and ambition, on the side of established error; if you recollect in what degree the spirit of intolerance has checked free inquiry, not only before, but since the reformation; you will see that Christianity cannot have freed itself from all the human inventions, which disfigured it under the papal tyranny. No. Much stubble is yet to be burnt; much rubbish to be removed; many gaudy decorations, which a false taste has hung around Christianity, must be swept away; and the earth-born fogs, which have long shrouded it, must be scattered, before this divine fabric will rise before us in its native and awful majesty, in its harmonious proportions, in its mild

and celestial splendors. This glorious reformation in the church, we hope, under God's blessing, from the progress of the human intellect, from the moral progress of society, from the consequent decline of prejudice and bigotry, and, though last not least, from the subversion of human authority in matters of religion, from the fall of those hierarchies, and other human institutions, by which the minds of individuals are oppressed under the weight of numbers, and a papal dominion is perpetuated in the protestant church. Our earnest prayer to God is, that he will overturn, and overturn, and overturn the strong holds of spiritual usurpation, until HE shall come, whose right it is to rule the minds of men; that the conspiracy of ages against the liberty of Christians may be brought to an end; that the servile assent, so long yielded to human creeds, may give place to honest and devout inquiry into the scriptures; and that Christianity, thus purified from error, may put forth its almighty energy, and prove itself, by its ennobling influence on the mind, to be indeed 'the power of God unto salvation.'

1st Series No. 109.

ON

PROFESSION OF RELIGION.

By REV. ORVILLE DEWEY.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON,

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

August, 1836.

Price 5 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, SCHOOL ST.

PROFESSION OF RELIGION.

It is our desire to recommend more frequent and formal avowals of religious experience than are common among us; and with a view to urge upon the attention of our readers some of the proper modes of such avowal, we wish to lay before them two general considerations. One is, the importance of fixtures and landmarks in the religious course; and the other is the influence upon every man of an assumed character.

These points obviously bear upon ritual observances; and we are the more willing to discuss them, because we believe that the tendency of the present times is too much to the neglect of such observances. If forms have had too much, far too much importance assigned to them in past times, this very circumstance might justly awaken our solicitude about the reaction of opinion in our own times. The Christian rites are falling into a disuse in this country, altogether unprecedented in Christendom. The tendencies of so singular a state of things certainly deserve to be very seriously considered. This is not a

country, most assuredly, which can forego any useful means of moral discipline and restraint. And he who lightly casts aside such means, or lightly talks of his liberty to do so, may be lightly doing or saying that, which is to have an inconceivable influence upon the welfare of future generations.

Now it appears to us, that in the way of life and in the way of generations, there should be distinct and formal recognitions of the religious principle; and this is what we mean by fixtures and landmarks in the religious course Every child, we are disposed to say, — every youth, every man, every people should be brought, at certain times and seasons, to the regular, stated, and solemn acknowledgment and cultivation of religion, as the great source of their happiness, and the great end of their being. If religion be such, and if, at the same time, it is not, any more than knowledge, spontaneous in its growth, why should it not be so cultivated? Why should not moral culture be carried on by processes just as exact and as well defined, as intellectual culture? Admit that there is a principle or power of religion in the mind, as there is a principle or power of intelligence. The most liberal philosopher and legislator for the mind would not, probably, demand any more. But the principle of intelligence is sent to school. It has lessons and tasks appointed for it. They should, indeed, be as carefully as possible adapted to the mind, and should possess as little as possible the character of *mere* tasks, and there may be, after all, a great deal of imperfection about them. Still no one hesitates to introduce them into the course of education. There are, also, regular gradations in the mental course, and distinct periods of instruction,

and probation, and profession. Why should not a similar course be pursued with the religious principle? Why so much dread or dislike, as some entertain, of catechisms and confirmations, and of the communion service? If knowledge is an object of rational pursuit and acquisition, so is religion. If the one is difficult to acquire, so is the other. But, should we think it safe to let the principle of intelligence take its chance for improvement in the world, without appointing for it any steps, or processes, or plans? Why, then, should we think this of the religious principle?

We have been careful, let it be observed, to speak of the general principle of intelligence in this comparison. There are specific and technical acquisitions of knowledge which to a certain extent, distinguish it from religion. But if the object were to educate bare intelligence; if it were to train, for instance, the power of reasoning, to its greatest strength and perfection, it is obvious that plans and processes would be arranged for so doing. The pupil would not be left to slide along, as he might, into the perfection of this great faculty. The teacher, the parent, would not be content with saying, "that he wished his child to be intelligent; that he intended now and then, on proper occasions, to remind him of the importance of possessing this character; that intelligence, like the sunshine, ought to be every where, and that there is danger of locating and confining it, or that it is a free principle, and that there is danger of enslaving or biasing it." No; "the vision and faculty divine," — divine though it be, — he would train; he would guard; he would educate. And the question is,

Why shall he not do the same thing with the religious nature?

But we must urge something farther with regard to the case just stated. This gliding along in the moral course without any definite purpose, without any distinct landmarks, realizes to our view one of the most alarming representations of spiritual negligence. It is thus that childhood glides into youth, and youth into manhood, and manhood into declining years, and the man sinks to moral perdition, because he was never led at any one point to inquire whither he was going; because no stated hour of meditation and prayer, no season of self-examination, no appointed and solemn recognition of religion, ever called him to consider what he was, or for what he was preparing. The parent, with his vague feeling about religion, has no definite plan for the religious instruction of his child; unless it be a plan to exclude every thing definite. No lessons must be set for him; no evening prayers must rise by his couch of rest, nor is the place of these supplied by frequent and earnest conversation with the child, on the great themes of piety. What, now, is, and must be, the result? Childhood steals away, with its bright dream, and with no more distinct track. As it knows nothing but what it is taught, and is taught no religion, no impressions on this momentous theme mark the footsteps of early years. Youth comes, but it is signalized by no memorials of piety. If some religious impressions are felt, in entering upon the threshold of life, and this is not uncommon at that interesting period, yet nothing is done to fix or confirm these impressions; the mind is not led to habitual, daily prayer, or to that solemn profession of religious purposes which is so be-

coming and beautiful, as an inaugural act, a consecration to the great duties of a moral existence. With no moral fixtures, with no distinct mementos, with no holy pledges, this early susceptibility of religious impression yields to the power of active employments; there is no landmark or barrier lifted up amidst the tide of business or pleasure; and negligent youth sinks almost unconsciously into early manhood. And thus life passes on, and passes away; and comes to its close, perhaps, with the astounding conviction, that little or nothing has been distinctly done or even determined, with regard to the great end for which life was given.

Would it not, probably, have been otherwise, if religious impressions had had their due importance and prominence distinctly and openly assigned to them; if there had been visible memorials of the religious life to mark its progress; if the traveller in his moral pilgrimage had, from time to time, set up altars, and worshipped the God of life? We cannot possibly doubt, that stated meditations and solemn pledges, justly regarded, would be of great moral service; that the gathering up of religious purposes, in daily prayer, or in the communion season, would help, and strengthen, and further many, who are now faltering in the right way, or forgetting what that way is.

Let it not be thought that we would set any usages in competition with the importance of individual conviction. The question is, How is individual conviction most likely to be awakened, and how can it best be sustained? It is undoubtedly a delicate question. There should not be too much form nor too little, if we can find the medium. But our conviction is, that the public mind is leaning to a neglect of forms which is inexpedient and dangerous.

The forms of religion are forms of avowal; and this, as we have stated, it is our object to urge. With reference to this object, let us now dwell for a moment on the other general consideration; namely, the influence upon every man of an assumed character.

Men are commonly treated with decided reference to the character in which they choose to pass in the world. It is usually thought the part of politeness to do so. The employments or the amusements which their friends devise to occupy or to entertain them will be influenced, in general, by this consideration of their taste and habits. Especially will this be true of the conversation addressed to them. If the topics of a man's discourse are always worldly or trifling; if he never says any thing on religion; if he rather avoids the subject; if it is difficult to draw him into any free and hearty discussion of it; if, so far from professing religion, he rather professes, by his manner, and perhaps by his words, to be out of his proper sphere when speaking of it; he will, in almost all cases, be treated accordingly. And although he may feel a strong interest in the subject at times, he must expect to forego the advantages of frequent and friendly intercourse upon it. It is indeed a serious loss. How many friendly interviews are there, and especially with the young, in which all free and kind interchange of thought on this holy and heart-awakening theme are avoided, from certain foolish, almost unaccountable, and chilling reserves that prevail with regard to it!

But if a man is treated by others, as he chooses to be considered, it is still more important to observe, that his own treatment of himself is in a great measure governed by the same rule. There is scarcely any thing from

which a man more habitually *acts*, than from reference to this assumed character. If any one would be thought to possess courage, he almost insensibly puts on the manner indicative of that quality, and strives, almost without knowing it, to possess the quality itself. Or, if he is ambitious, if he would be thought to be distinguished for talents, or wealth, or influence, his manners insensibly take that tone; and they tend directly and strongly to form the very character which he assumes.

This influence of an assumed character is indeed of immense importance, *because* it acts with such a certain and almost blind fidelity; because it accompanies a man, like a kind of presence, an unsought, but ever admonishing presence, which constantly says to him, "Is this proper for you? is this suitable for such as you profess to be? is this in character?"

Now to bring this principle in aid of religious culture, avowal is necessary. It is necessary that we should say, either in direct terms, or by the frequent tenor of our conversation, or else, by some more formal profession, — by some of these means or by all of them, it is necessary to say, that we hold religion to be a serious and important concern; that we purpose to make it an end; that we do not intend to consign it to the care of others, but to make it our own care. Nothing therefore, as it seems to us, can be of greater moral disservice to a man, than to be habitually saying, that "he is not a religious man; that every body knows he is not a religious man; that he does not profess any thing of that sort." And absolute silence, or absolute reserve may say this, as effectually as any set declaration. And certainly, nothing can be of worse consequence, for this reason, among

others, that no man will rise above the measure of his deliberate intentions. If any man assumes for himself this negative character in religion, what has he to do, but to conform to it, and to follow it out? What more likely than that he will for ever *be* the negligent man that he chooses to be thought? What more fatal though unworthy apology for his negligence than that he never pretends to any interest about these matters.

Such is this influence of a professed or adopted character, that rectitude itself is oftentimes not so strong a bond as consistency. How commonly will a man give up an argument, when his consistency is appealed to, without any attempt to plead the right or to question the wrong upon the absolute truth of the case. "You have often said thus and thus," or, "you have always done this or that," is final and decisive with most persons, though the matter in question be utterly indefensible by any better reason.

Now it is a dictate of wisdom, which we would urge, to bring this sense of the demands of consistency, this influence of a professed character, into the service of religion. Let any one who has come to feel the claims of this great subject upon him, who is conscious of his weakness at the same time, who feels the need of every lawful bond that will hold him to his duty, let him give pledges, in his conversation, and in more express and formal acts, of his interest in religion and of his purposed adherence to its ways. Dwelling amidst a negligent generation, liable to fall by easy acquiescence into evil or worldly courses, let him openly and nobly say with Joshua "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord'

We will now proceed to consider, as we proposed, some of the proper methods of this avowal.

It is a mistake, as we regard it, to confine the idea of professing religion to a single act, — the observance of the rite of the Lord's Supper. This is not the only form of avowal; and we intend to discuss others. But it is one form, and, indeed, it is the only public form of avowal; and as such demands attention.

We see the world hurrying on, in the eager and almost exclusive pursuit of palpable and perishing objects. We see it forgetful to an extent that pains, and sometimes alarms us with fears for the very existence of religion, — forgetful, we say, of God and of eternity. What is all this coming to? Whither is this flood of cares and pleasures and vanities driving men? Where shall religion find some secure refuge, — some ark of safety? These are the agitating questions. Now, if we know that there are some who deeply feel the value of this great interest, it is natural certainly to ask, whether they might not do something by uniting and expressing, even in a formal manner, their sense of its value.

Let us refer, for our guidance, to some kindred examples. Let us suppose that we lived in a community where the grossest dishonesty was prevalent, where the most enormous frauds were daily, openly, and boldly committed. Suppose that we felt the want of some equally open, and, at the same time, combined and concentrated testimony against them. Would it be an unnatural thing for us to join with others in publicly disclaiming such practices, and in avowing openly our purpose at every risk to abstain from them? Suppose, again, that our country were suffering under the oppressions of an arbitrary government, and that a patriotic band were formed to work out its deliverance. Would it not seem very

proper that they should commence that enterprise with a solemn declaration of their intentions, and with mutual pledges of fidelity to the cause? We do not desire to stretch these comparisons to an unreasonable extent. But we do conceive that the irreligion of the world is so great, as to make it desirable that some express and solemn and formal testimony should be lifted up against it. We do conceive, that the cause of human nature, the cause not of earthly, but of divine freedom, is borne down with such a tremendous power of prevailing hostility and evil example, that some visible stand should be taken for it, — that there should be somewhere a rallying point for what is good against what is evil.

We do not say that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a rallying point for all the good there is in the world. We know that many virtuous and pious men have difficulties of various kinds with regard to it. But we think it might be made the ground of a solemn pledge to religion, and of a sacred union in its cause.

Must it needs be thought that there would be more zeal than modesty, in taking this ground? We are persuaded, there might be both; and both in a form, which could offend no reasonable, and at the same time, religious mind. A man might say on this subject, — and would it not be the language of sobriety and humility? would it not be a language that ought to command universal respect? — he might say, "I am conscious that I am not decidedly enough what I ought to be; I am impressed with the transcendent value and happiness of a religious life. It is the life above all others that I would lead. But I have reason to fear that I shall waver from the strict virtue, sobriety, and godliness which are my

chief interest; and I am willing to come under any edges that will help to secure me. It is not pride, I trust, but humility, that brings me to lay my hand on the altar of God, and to pay my vows to him. Why should hesitate," might he continue to say, "why should I hesitate for any slight or ordinary causes, from any over-refined delicacy, from any sensitiveness to the world's opinion or to the world's estimate of the act, about giving this weighty testimony? Why should I hesitate?" might he repeat. "Earth, with all its vanities, is soon to pass away. Heaven and eternity will soon be all to me. I have thoughts within me, that visit that eternity; and make me feel unutterably how poor are the objects that the great world is seeking after. I have thoughts within me that visit that eternity; and I would erect some altars to them, on this shore of time. I care nothing so much for this passing world, as I care to leave these testimonies in it. The altar of communion is not the only altar of testimony, I know; but this is already builded, and I will lay my offering upon it. I will lay it there, with faith in that blood, which first prinkled and consecrated it. Thousands there are to bring their offerings to every shrine of honor, wealth, and pleasure. Thousands there are, to pay homage to the great and powerful. Multitudes gather to the civic feast, in honor of the glorious dead. I would celebrate the memory of a being more glorious than any that ever has appeared on the earth. I would do this in remembrance of my Saviour, because it is a remembrance which is so commonly lost and left out of sight amidst worldly pretensions and vanities. I am the more willing to do this by an unusual action; I am willing to do that which

may appear to our customs, strange and extraordinary for the sake of giving a more marked testimony of my reverence for this great Being. It is a testimony, in which I have cause to glory, more than in all the honors of the world. I will not offer it in secret. I will not offer it merely in the secret truth and sincerity of my own heart. It is a good profession, and I will profess it before many witnesses."

Be it so, that there are difficulties about this ordinance. We admit that there are many, which have accumulated upon us from times of early superstition, and times of later exclusiveness. The ordinance is generally shut up within the pale of examinations and votes, and professions of faith, as, we think, it ought not to be. All this is of the later growth. But there is an old superstition about it, which creates still more difficulty. There is, in fact, a state of feeling about this rite, which goes far, it seems to us, towards disqualifying many persons from the useful observance of it. We are willing to say so much, not, in the issue, to discourage any, but to lead them, if our opinion may have any weight, to examine their own misgivings about the ordinance. Christian superstition seems to have its last strong hold in the mysteries of the communion. We venture to doubt, if they will pardon the presumption, whether the body of any of our Christian congregations has yet advanced far enough to make the entirely simple, natural, and just use of it; whether the body of any of our congregations is prepared to approach this rite, with feelings as free and unembarrassed, as those of the primitive Christians.

If there were this preparation o mind, we should feel that most of the difficulties were removed, which now lie in our way to urging the observance ; and we believe

that most of the difficulties that hinder serious minds from approaching it, would be removed by the same means. And, therefore, to obviate objections in this case, the proper course seems to be, to rectify misapprehensions. Let our people be induced, as the first thing, to take a calm and liberal view of this ceremony. What is it, and what is its purpose? It is nothing more than an emblematic representation of Jesus Christ in the most affecting era of his history, in the most sublime manifestation of his virtues, in that closing scene, which visibly consummated his great redeeming work. It is a "showing forth" of that scene of agony and death, which was designed to save us from death, — from the death of the soul, — from the curse and woe and death of sin. And the purpose of this celebration on our part is nothing more than to express our reverence and affection for this great and glorious Benefactor, and to declare our intention of being governed by his spirit and religion. Is it not meet that we should feel such sentiments? And if they are felt by us, is it not meet that we should express them? If it were proposed to celebrate the virtues and services of any more ordinary benefactor, — to honor, for instance, the memory of Washington, in a feast, and thus to pledge ourselves to the cultivation of his lofty spirit of patriotism, there would be no difficulty to our minds in the way of such an observance. It will be said, perhaps, that the communion is more spiritual and solemn. But is this an objection in the view of beings, whose spiritual welfare — the very object of Christ's mission — is commended to them as a most momentous and solemn trust, and a trust for eternity? Surely the observance need be none the less interesting for being solemn; and it may, in perfect consistency with that

sentiment, be cheering, elevating, and gratifying to all the noblest sentiments of the mind. It was thus that the ancients were wont to cherish the remembrance of their departed friends and benefactors. Nor has that affecting custom gone into entire disuse in modern times. We may have frequently seen a similar homage rendered to departed associates in the festivals of various literary societies among us; and it is not easy to witness that reverent posture, that silence, and that solemn and sad emotion, in the throng of the joyous feast, without being touched and elevated by the spectacle.

It is true, indeed, that the communion is not now, as it was originally, a feast. In this respect it has lost a portion of its natural, primitive character. It is now only the emblem of a feast; it is doubly symbolical, representing a feast, as well as the great facts and truths originally signified by it. But it is probably more safe, as well as more suitable to the growing refinement of the world, as an emblem, than if it were a feast. It is true, too, that homages of this kind to the dead, are not so common in our days, as they were among the ancients. But although there is something more unusual to our feelings in this ceremony, and more difficult to communicate with, and more liable, therefore, to the perversions of superstitions, can it require anything more than a resolute effort at just thinking, to overcome these obstacles?

If they cannot be overcome by any of those who are invited to this form of religious observance, if the communion cannot, by any reasonable endeavor, be made interesting or useful to them; if men can be drawn to it only by a compulsory sense of duty, without any consciousness of advantage; if there can be no voluntary and happy approach to this, such as there is to other or-

dinances of devotion; if churches, in fact, can be built up and sustained only by officiousness and importunity on the part of the minister, in persuading this and that man, that he is a suitable person and had better come to this ordinance; — if all this be so, and so unavoidably, we are disposed to say that the rite of the Lord's Supper were better neglected, than abused in this manner. But we submit it to the reflection of our readers, whether this is necessary, and we desire no hasty answer. We ask whether there may not be a rational, just, and useful participation in an occasion so interesting on many accounts to all devout Christians? We ask them to consider, whether, if all among us, who feel an interest in religion, should come forward and thus publicly avow it, — whether, we say, it would not be attended with the happiest effects upon themselves, and upon society? If they think that it would be; if they think that it would quicken and strengthen the sentiments of virtue and devotion among us; if they think that so vast and transcendent an interest, — that chiefly for which life ought to be dear — might be thus promoted, then we ask again, whether any slight difficulties, real or imaginary, shall prevent Christian men from giving the aid of their example and testimony to a cause, for which our blessed Saviour thought it not too much to give up his life?

We have said that this testimony is the only *public* recognition, which we can make of our religious obligations. It is the only public form of avowal, which our religious institutions provide for us; and this consideration, it seems to us, even if we had objections to the mode, is one of great force. Attendance at church is not any express avowal of religious feeling. It does not

amount, in fact, to a declaration of belief in Christianity. The only public, formal, and authorized expression, now understood as such, of belief in Christianity, and that connected with a serious purpose to obey its precepts, is to be found in the sacramental vows of the communion table. Is it not desirable that there should be such an expression, — public, formal, and unquestionable? Is it not proper and expedient that the great interest of life and of being should be thus openly and solemnly recognised, thus acknowledged in the presence of each other, thus avowed before heaven and earth? "Heaven and earth shall pass away;" and this great purpose and profession of the soul shall then stand, as the only thing sacred from the universal wreck; the only thing intrinsically great, momentous, and sublime. If that stupendous consummation, foretold in prophecy, were about to break upon us now, would it not be announced by solemn tokens? Would there not be harbingers in the sky to proclaim it? Could any tokens be too solemn for its annunciation? But here is that in the moral creation, which shall triumph over all material changes, that great aim of life, that great design of being, whose goings forth are to eternity; and is it not proper that its adoption and progress should be signalized by tokens equally significant and striking? We will not submit to any worldly judgment in this matter; for that judgment will say that we talk all in figures, and it will feel as if we spoke only of useless forms, or of forms disproportionate to the importance of the subject. But let us suppose the transcendent power, and the all-engrossing importance of religion, to be felt among us, as they ought to be, — felt as if all things else were but the pass-

ing shadows of existence — and would form and avowal be thought such great matters as they now are, and possession and reality so small, in the comparison? For really the feelings of many go to this extent, that they think more anxiously of a profession of religion, than of the possession of it; that emblems are more serious things to them, than realities; that the sacramental service is more solemn to them, than the feelings which it is designed to express and confirm. Let religion be the great reality that it should be, possessing the whole soul with its unspeakable grandeur and importance, and then forms, representations, avowals would fall into their proper place, — would assume their just character. They would be put on as an easy and appropriate costume, and not as the strange and awkward mummery of a masquerade habit, where the wearer is thinking more of his dress than of himself. They would be worn as a suitable and graceful garment, to clothe, to cheer, and strengthen, and not as rigid fetters, hindering every free and manly step of the mind.

Expressions, emblems, forms would then be natural, and not the artificial things which they now usually are. It is a weak and low state of spiritual feeling, or a narrow range of reflection; it is a spirit of bondage, and not of liberty, that makes them the artificial or the awful things which they now are to many. For we contest altogether the common idea, that a high degree of religious expansion and refinement of mind, naturally lead their possessor to entertain an inveterate dislike or dread of forms. He who can look upon the communion but as an awful, a fearful rite, seems to us, to be yet in an early stage of Christian experience. The full liberty where-

with Christ hath made us free, and made us welcome, too, to this feast of remembrance, will enable us to partake of it, with a mind, as calm, as free, as natural, as that with which we approach any other religious duty. The truth is, that some who think themselves too far advanced for the use of forms, are not yet advanced far enough, are not yet liberal enough for the right use of them. They are as much in bondage to the dread of forms, as others have been in bondage to the admiration of them. They are as superstitious in the rejection, as others have been in the observance of them. The same superstitious feeling is experienced by the communicant, when he is possessed with a peculiar and almost painful dread, at the moment of partaking of the elements; as if it were the emblem, rather than the occasion, the eating or drinking, rather than the great avowal, that is solemn. This is a relic of the doctrine of the *real presence.*

But to return; we say that forms are natural to the mind. They are so in every thing besides religion, and there is no just reason why they should not be in that. What are forms indeed, but expressions of the mind within; and, in this respect, of the same nature with language. The marriage ceremony is essentially nothing else but the expression or declaration of a certain purpose. It is a formality in some respects, very trying to most minds, inasmuch as most minds naturally shrink from so public a declaration of some of their most interesting sentiments and purposes. But its utility vindicates it; so that he is generally considered as the most dangerous enemy of society, who would propose its abolition. We might cite many other instances, and derive an argu-

ment *a fortiori* for forms in religion. An entrance upon civil office is solemnized by forms, by oaths of inauguration. May not the entrance of the mind upon its great religious work be marked likewise by solemn and repeated professions of its intention and by vows of fidelity? The privilege of citizenship in our country cannot be obtained but by passing through certain forms of naturalization, by giving pledges of allegiance to the government. May not those, who would be "no more strangers, but of the household of faith," who would be citizens in the kingdom of Christ, may they not properly be called upon to make similar professions and give similar pledges? Nay, and a man will not enter upon extensive travels without announcing his purpose, and giving many indications of his purpose. May not the traveller to eternity enter upon that course, which is to conduct him onward forever, with similar declarations of his solemn purpose, and with tokens equally distinct and prominent of the stupendous undertaking he has set before him?

We have now stated the views which have impressed our own minds, not indeed with the supreme importance, but with the reasonableness and utility of that avowal of religious purposes, which is implied in an attendance upon the communion. We have not thought it necessary to take up any space in our pages with urging it as a prescribed duty. It has seemed to us, that it is too much regarded as a mere duty, as a thing necessary to be done, without any distinct conceptions of its propriety or advantage. We have therefore dwelt on these. We fear there are many, that actually partake of the communion, who would retire from it, if they did not feel that the bond of an express injunction is on them. It must in-

deed be difficult, as we think, for any man, with the new Testament in his hands, to free his conscience from that bond. But still it must be unfortunate, that it should be regarded as a *mere* injunction, binding for no intelligible reason, strengthened by no obvious ties of interest, or intrinsic fitness. A duty which is performed more as a mechanical than as a moral action, which is done, because it presses on the conscience as something that must be done, while there is no experience or hope of advantage or improvement, is scarcely the duty of a rational being.

We are aware, let us add, in passing to consider another mode of avowal, that it may be thought that the strongest objection to the observance in question lies in the very view which has been presented of it, as an avowal of religious experience. It may be said by many, that the avowal required goes beyond their experience, that the pledge is one which they are afraid they shall not redeem, and that altogether it places them in an unfair position before society, and must subject them to a scrutiny which they are unwilling to undergo.

This objection, as it applies equally to all the other modes of avowal, we will reserve for examination, till we have gone through with the whole subject. We proceed then, in the next place, to consider that acknowledgment of God and of religious truths and interests, which ought, as we think, to be made in our *families*.

When we look upon a family, when we contemplate it, as a company of human beings passing through a most solemn and perilous trial for happiness and heaven, when we observe there the most intimate of all relationships, exerting too the most direct and powerful of all moral

influences, when we know that nothing but the true love of God, and of one another, can make that family happy, that this alone can make all duties easy, and alleviate all trials, and smooth all difficulties, and soften all harsh and angry thoughts; when we consider how soon it shall pass away from the earth, away to its everlasting destiny,—how soon and how certainly sickness, separation, death shall come in the midst of all its earthly joys and hopes,—we ask, if nothing of all this shall be openly and fully recognised in its dwelling? That dwelling itself is mouldering to dust, and a century or two hence the passing winds shall bear no sound of mirth or grief from all its desolate chambers;—shall no altars be set up there to the hopes that are immortal, and no voices be lifted to the regions of everlasting life? Toils and temptations, and cares and anxieties and tears are in that dwelling; shall there be no prayers, no holy communing with the sacred page, no common, no united resort to the sources of relief, and comfort, and strength? Youth is there taking its deepest impressions, and it is going forth to struggle with the perils and sorrows of life,—the youth of the immortal is there, and it is there taking its eternal biases; shall not religion be lifted up before its eyes visibly, as the great hope of a happy life, and of a blessed eternity?

Why shall it not? The objection that there is a want of time is too trivial to be discussed. The want of competency on the part of the heads of families cannot be fairly alleged. If it were so, that any one felt himself unable to lead the devotions of others, or if he felt it difficult to present himself in so new a character before his family, could he not, at least, daily read the Scriptures

in the presence of his assembled household? Might he not introduce, as a part of his domestic arrangements, the practice, at some hour of the morning or evening, of reading the Bible or some book of devotion, for religious improvement; and would not silent meditation and prayer, or more direct and formal worship, very soon and naturally follow? If any one says, that a stated practice of this kind might sometimes call upon him, when his mind was unprepared or averse to it, and might thus lead him into bondage or mockery, instead of real and free devotion, then, at least, let him begin to do this occasionally, and endeavor to acquire the habit, which he might do, of making it constantly interesting. Or, if any one says, that he doubts about formal services of any kind, but that he will often speak to his children and domestics, of moral principle, of inward purity, of the love of God, and of prayer, as the chief interest and end of life, then let him do this faithfully and heartily. Let him do this, with feeling and fervor, and it will not be long, we are persuaded, before he will feel it neither strange nor irksome, to bow in solemn and cheerful worship before the Father of spirits and the God of all mercies.

We are not strenuous about the form, but we do insist that in some form, or in some way, religion should be acknowledged in our families more than is usually done, as the supreme object of life, and the only guide to eternity. Circumstances never assume their proper character, things never take their just place, in our families, till religion is thus elevated to its rightful supremacy among us. Till this is done, domestic life has no lofty aim; events, that are daily taking place in every family, have no clear interpreter; success and disappointment, sickness and

health, are mere earthly accidents, and fulfil no high or sacred ministry. Is it not suitable that religion, Heaven's chief agent and interpreter and guide, should stand thus visibly before us? When Moses had delivered the great commandment to the Israelites, saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," he added, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and upon thy gates."

This passage was literally interpreted and obeyed among the Jews, though it is thought by most commentators, that in making frontlets, or pieces of parchment, with certain sentences of the law written upon them, to bind upon the forehead, as also upon the hands, they were too literal. It is observable, however, that among the Jews and most other nations, the usages of domestic piety have been much more common than among ourselves. In the earliest periods of the history of most nations, the master of a family, and the ruler of a people, almost invariably fulfilled the office of a priest, by offering libations and sacrifices. Among Christian nations, in former times, there have been many indications of the same character; — private oratories, or places of prayer, sacred images, with frequent homages to them, in every dwelling, and many other visible tokens of its dedication

to religion, and to God. It would be most grateful to believe, if we could lawfully do so, that while the direct indications of domestic devotion have been declining in modern times, those which are indirect and more unequivocal, have been increasing. We know that indirect manifestations of character are often the most decisive and unquestionable. We often see, for instance, the spirit of covetousness or of ambition, spreading itself through a family, and so thoroughly imbibed, and so fully acted on, that it is frequently most obvious, when least ostentatious, — most evident when least intended to be manifest. If any one prefers thus to exhibit his religion in his family, we will take him at his own proposition; — let us see it thus exhibited, as the ruling principle. It will not always show itself by indirect disclosures; it will carry visible rules and regulations in its train, as every governing principle does. What, for instance, does the ambitious man do for his child? He sets him tasks, he labors to arouse him to emulation, he talks with him often, directly, and feelingly on the point, which he has at heart. What interest does he show in his dependents? He endeavors to train them to his purposes; he instils his lessons into their memories; he teaches them distinctly the part they have to act; he strives by every means to kindle and inflame their zeal. Thus let the pious man act for the great cause of religion, — not doing barely what is set down for him, or what will appease his conscience, but doing all that he can do or devise, in furtherance of so precious and momentous an interest. His family, his children, the beings for whom he is bound as their superior to care, the cherished and beloved, have no other such interest at stake as this. Honors may thicken

upon them, wealth may lavish upon them its treasures, but the time is hasting to them when all earthly accumulation and aggrandizement shall be as nothing in their eyes; when affliction, sickness, death shall come, and they shall thank him more for one hour's timely instruction, for one word of religious tenderness spoken to them in some former and well remembered hour, than for all the gifts that the fortune or fame of his house can bestow upon them. O then, when the eye of affection fixes its last, earnest gaze upon any one of us, it will not be wealth or splendor, to which it shall turn; it will not be the evidences of worldly prosperity that shall pass before it; it will not be those images which have been set up in our households, to pride or the love of display, but it will be our prayers, upon which the eye of memory shall linger; it will be the sacred page spread before our family; it will be the seasons of pious communing together; it will be the teaching and the tender voice of parental love and authority, that guideth to heaven.

There is another mode of avowal, on which, if our readers will bear with us, we wish to offer some remarks. We are not willing entirely to pass over the subject of *conversation*, and the duty of taking a stand for religion in the intercourse of society and friendship; in that sphere of life where we spend so many hours, and exert so powerful an influence. Society, conversation, speech, is not yet consecrated to religion and to God, as it ought to be; and there is probably a weaker sense of obligation, in this respect, than in most others.

Yet nothing, perhaps, more distinctly marks a man, or makes a more distinct impression with regard to his character, than his conversation. This, therefore, is, in the

very nature of things, one of the most important modes of religious profession or avowal. We may partake of the communion; we may read the Scriptures in our families; we may make formal prayers, with great earnestness; and yet, if we never say any thing of religion, the avowal is incomplete. Our formal acts of acknowledgment, indeed, may be before the world, and so far is well; but without the testimony of hearty and habitual conversation, our acquaintances and friends can never feel that the interests of religion have possession of our minds, as other great interests have. They may say of any one, "He is a professor; he prays; he is a serious man;" but they will never feel to the very heart, that he is a Christian. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." It speaketh so in other things; and it must speak so in religion, to give satisfactory assurance of the principle within.

Let it not be said, as if that were any thing contrary to the view now stated, that "*actions* speak louder than words." Actions *fulfil* the profession of our lips. Actions are not avowal, but the accomplishment of our vows. We mean, of course, the ordinary actions of a virtuous, holy life. There are certain specific and formal acts, such as that of celebrating the Lord's Supper and that of domestic devotion, which are of the nature of avowal. Such, also, are a very constant attendance at church, and a decided part taken in all good religious enterprises. They serve, to some extent, to *point out* a man, as interested in religion. But the ordinary tenor of his life is to show, whether he is so interested, not whether he professes to be. It is the proof, not the pledge. And however important and indispensable it is as proof, this is

not the point now before us. The subject, with which we are now engaged, is that lesser, but still very important subject, the pledge.

In proposing that this pledge or expression of religious feeling should be freely and frankly given in conversation, we would not recommend what often passes under the name, and is considered as bearing the peculiar character of "religious conversation." There is a talking upon religion with preciseness and formality, with reluctance and constraint, with artificial solemnity or sadness, which is the avowal in fact, not of religious feeling, but of the want of it. We would ask no expression from any one of what does not exist in him. But where it does exist, where there is a true and heartfelt interest in this great subject, then, we would say, let the lips declare what the heart feels. The wonderful faculty of speech was designed to express the thoughts within; and surely it ought not to withhold its testimony from those sentiments and affections that are due to the great Giver. "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life," says the Psalmist, "my lips shall praise thee."

But how may this avowal be properly given in conversation? It may be given in the intimacy and confidence of friendship. We may say to our friends more, perhaps, than it would be proper to say to the world at large. We may express to them, not only the deep interest we feel in the subject, but our fears, also, our anxieties, our difficulties. We may unfold to them, whatever is peculiar in the state of our minds. We may speak of our peculiar temptations, of the sins that most easily beset us, of the passions, or of the circumstances, that threaten our moral welfare. Men speak thus freely to one another of

the affairs of business. They lay open their difficulties, and ask counsel of those in whom they can confide. Why should they not use the same freedom, and obtain the same aid, in the religious concerns of the mind? The difficulties are as great, surely, and the exigencies are as critical, as they are in business. And they would often be relieved, simply by disclosure, and by the affectionate sympathy and the friendly communication that would follow. Why should not this be done, we repeat. Why should not they whose friendship, but for religion, would be only like the breath that utters it, a transient emotion, a kindling warmth, soon to be lost in the region of cold and eternal oblivion, — why should they not speak of that in which they trust to be friends for ever? Why should not they, who are travelling together the path to heaven, sometimes refer in their discourse to the bright and boundless prospect before them? Why, if any thing is to be common between kindred minds, should not religion be common in their mutual recognition, and familiar in their friendly conversation? And yet, in some minds even of considerable religious sensibility, religion is the one and only subject, of which they never speak, even to their most intimate friends! The lips, though touched as with "a coal from the altar" of their secret meditations, are sealed in a strange and almost superstitious silence!

In the next place, there is frequent occasion for a reference to the most exalted principles of religion, in the ordinary intercourse of life. Common conversation is to a very great extent worldly, — worldly, we mean, not merely in its topics, but in its principles, and more worldly too, than the feelings of many, who engage in it, can

justify; and yet they seldom have the moral courage, perhaps, to do justice to their own misgivings. The feeling, it may be, is strong within a man, that he cannot agree with the tone of conversation that is passing in this or that company with which he is present; but the feeling that is so worthy to be expressed, is stifled in false shame, instead of being put forward in the shape of a manly and ingenuous testimony. The character of the absent, for instance, may be discussed in a manner and spirit that are felt to be wrong, and yet no one, perhaps, checks the course of unkind criticism or slanderous insinuation, by saying that it is wrong.

Of the thousands of passing events and circumstances, that furnish the topics of ordinary conversation, there are few that may not be made the subjects of moral discrimination; there are few, in regard to which there is not a right and a wrong, — a wrong to be condemned without fear or favor, and a right to be contended for, in the same spirit. The testimony of honest and conscientious minds is not yet lifted as high as it ought to be, against mercantile fraud and disingenuity, against selfish cunning and cruel oppression in business. There is much that passes in the world as the way of the world, which deserves and greatly needs, for its reform, the most serious reprobation. The excessive coveting of property, the constant violation of promises in business, the unconscionable expedients often resorted to by clients in litigations, amounting in too many instances to the actual subornation of perjury, the universal leaning to self in every project and plan, — all this is apt to be lightly spoken of for the worst of all reasons, that of its commonness and prevalence. A searching and reproving

eye must be fixed upon these and all other gross moral evils, a decided voice must be raised against them, if they are ever to be corrected. Let men, let good men, speak for this cause of truth and righteousness, if they would ever speak for any thing. Let them know that no practices can long stand against a strong moral feeling in the community, if that feeling can once be put in array against them. Let them know that sin is emboldened, is almost kept in countenance, by their worldly laxity, acquiescence, indifference, or timidity. Let us have stronger and more decided words spoken for the good, and against the evil; the words of lofty and uncompromising rebuke against the wrong, or the more powerful words of a deep, desolate sorrow for it. Let us, also, sometimes hear men say, amidst the din and strife of this world's care, and labor, and business, — let them say to ears that will not mistake it, "These things are not the chief good; the things of this world are passing away from us like the images of a dream; let us not set our hearts upon them, let us not sacrifice one monition of conscience, one breathing of pure and pious affection for all earthly goods; in heaven let our treasures be, and let our hearts be there also."

There is one further view to be taken of this topic, and that is, of the general tenor of our conversation. It is by this, more than by any thing else, that a man is reputed to be grave or gay, serious or light-minded. The thoughts that lie deep within us, are unseen, and can be known only by some mode of manifestation. Now business in all its forms is essentially and mainly serious; it is bound down to this character of gravity by the very necessity of the case; and it furnishes, therefore, no

criterion of our disposition. Conversation only, and especially that of our unoccupied hours, is free. If then, it is chiefly employed upon light and trivial subjects, if its tone is habitually that of useless trifling, if its effort is always after jests and witticisms, the reputation of being thoughtless triflers will inevitably follow us. We may feel indeed, that the estimate does us injustice; we may feel that we have our serious and solemn reflections, serious and solemn as those of other men who wear a grave countenance; we may actually have them; and this, indeed, is the very thing to be regretted and complained of, that while we have our religious thoughts and feelings, they should be so completely covered over by the flimsy and fantastic veil of perpetual and pertinacious levity. We speak strongly, it may be thought; we speak, indeed, as if there were a degree of obstinacy in this diseased habit of trifling; and it is true that the evil does sometimes go to this extent. The extreme buoyancy and the superabundant spirits of the young, do not unfrequently, for a while, when directed to no rational employment, assume this character of excessive and wasteful gayety. They can scarcely speak a word that must not be singular and droll; they can scarcely dismiss their levity at church, or their folly from the school-room, whither they have been sent to learn wisdom. This is not to be spoken of with severity, perhaps, till it advances into the age of reflection; but then, surely, it is a sad misdirection and a grievous fault. It is a fault, as every careful observer must have perceived, which is particularly adverse to all elevated and manly improvement. The very spirit of that improvement, the spirit that has wrought deeply and struggled hard in the bosom of ge-

nius and of all high endeavor, has always been eminently serious; its chosen manifestations have not been the utterance of apt drolleries or ebullitions of senseless mirth; but the throbbing pulse and the bursting tear have been witnesses of unutterable thoughts within. And if it is an injurious fault, it is equally to be regarded as an unhappy misdirection of faculties that are destined to meet the great moral issue of a being such as ours. It is a sad thing to play the part of harlequin, in a drama, so serious as that which is passing on earth, and so momentous as that which is opening to the scenes of eternity.

We are not of those who would restrain any reasonable hilarity. We would not say any thing to check the natural buoyancy of humor, or the occasional sallies of wit. It is when it becomes the habitual and almost uninterrupted tenor of any one's conversation, that it is an unseemly and hurtful error. Nor should we hastily, in our own judgment, draw the usual inference from this habit, even when it goes thus far. We have often seen the deepest dejection, indeed, veiled over with artificial mirth, and still oftener have we seen a real gayety, which was only the alternation of the profoundest sadness. We have sometimes found too, that deep and even religious reflection was hidden beneath this trifling demeanor, — have found this to be the drapery, and not the man, that was thus exhibited to the world.

But where such is the true interpretation of this apparent anomaly in character, where acquired habit or natural impulse leads any really serious person to unusual gayety in conversation or demeanor, the obligation upon him, for a distinct avowal of his higher sentiments, is doubly urgent. He is bound to give the more explicit

testimony to those sentiments, in proportion as they are the more liable to be misapprehended. He should take pains most distinctly to say, or to do that which is tantamount to saying, "Though my temper leans to unusual buoyancy, and my spirits are naturally light and gay, yet let it not be supposed that I am indifferent to the great subject, in which every rational being should be interested. I may trifle, perhaps, more than I ought; it is difficult to draw the line, that separates indulgence from excess; it is possible to be too constantly serious for one's physical or mental health; but, God forbid that I should be at heart a trifler, or that any one should give me this unworthy name." Indeed, it may be peculiarly incumbent on a person of this character to express his reverence for religion, by formal acts of public or domestic devotion; though we are aware that the common judgment would be otherwise. We know that a really serious and religious man sometimes says, "My manners are not sufficiently governed and grave, for me to profess religion;" but we cannot agree with him. We should say that it is particularly expedient for him to give a solemn and deliberate testimony of his reverence for it.

It is not of this, however, that we are now speaking, but of a testimony in words, in conversation, and, to a greater extent than many do, in the *tenor* of their conversation. Let them consider how great is the effect of an assumed character in this respect upon themselves and upon the manner in which others will treat them. An attempt to support the character of a wit or of a trifler, or of an eccentric person, will often come in the way both of a man's intellectual and religious improvement, — in the way of deep thought, and of all fervent, devotional

affection. Others, too, by their almost unconscious expectations from him, by their constant treatment of him, will contribute to the same injurious result. Even good men, who are wont to hold solid and serious discourse with others, may never think of looking for any thing but amusement to him. Have we never seen one — capable, too, of sense and worth, gifted with powers that often showed themselves in the shrewd remark and the sharp answer, — have we never seen such an one made the laughing-stock of a village or neighborhood, the butt of gibes and jests, — to whom, as he passed, the ball of folly was flung out from every corner to rebound from the skull that covered his idle brain; — one, in short, made a fool, by having been treated as a fool, and treated as a fool because, in some evil hour, he took upon himself the character of a fool! The instance is, indeed, an extreme one; but some approach to that injury may be experienced by every one who makes any approach to the reputation of an habitual trifler or jester.

We must not leave the subject without noticing, as we have promised, two or three objections which are usually made, not to one mode or another of avowal, but to avowal itself. These are probably, in most minds, the leading and principal objections.

One says, "I have no religious experience to avow in any form, — neither in the communion, nor in domestic worship, nor in conversation." Let the objection stop here, and let it be set down for a fair and honest statement, and we must allow that it removes the case from our present consideration. If a man has no religion, of course, we say, let him avow none. We desire hypocrisy to bring no offerings. But is the objection a just and

sincere one? Does it stop at the point stated? We are convinced that, in many cases, it is quite otherwise. A man says, "I have no religious experience to avow;" but he does not mean what his words mean. He is not willing to deny himself the possession of every pure and holy sentiment. He is not willing to say that he is utterly alienated from God and from goodness; that he is one whom neither heaven nor hell moves from his stupidity; whom the thoughts, neither of flying time nor of boundless eternity, arouse to any emotions, either serious or sublime. No; but his objection proceeds to qualifications. "He has no religion to avow;" and there he is willing that the matter should rest, so long as it will serve simply as an excuse. But do you take him at his word, and tell him that you are then to consider him as one whom no sacred or pious thoughts ever visit, or whom they visit only to be abhorred; and he will probably change his tone, and say, that "he has his thoughts of religion and his feelings about it, as well as another." Well; if he has religious thoughts and feelings, why shall he not avow them, avow so much as he has, and no more? Why not, at least, confess his deficiency, — a confession sometimes so made, made with such regret and pain, as to be one of the most interesting and promising of all avowals? But perhaps the objector means, not that he has no religion, but that he has not religion *enough* to make it proper for him to avow it. But is any such distinction fairly to be made? Is there any one point in religious experience where it is proper for avowal to begin? Is the day of small things to be despised? Must it not always come before the day of great things? But perhaps it is a real and amiable modesty that leads

some to hesitate. There may be a hearty interest in religion, and an earnest desire to promote it, but the possessor of these feelings says, "I am not the person to come forward with professions; I should be ashamed to say that I am good, or spiritually minded." To such a one we have a single question to propose. Is modesty to stand in the place of all other virtues, and in the way of all other duties? Let it be ever so amiable and praiseworthy, but let it not be extravagant; let it not be held in exclusive respect as above all other claims. And if it were, yet what is this modesty after all? What is it but one of those virtues that fairly claim a frank and explicit acknowledgment? Modesty, an humble sense of our deficiencies, is no disqualification from avowal, but a special reason for it.

But in the next place, some will say, "We are afraid that we shall not keep our vows. If we were to establish a devotional service in our families, or were to attend the communion, and if we should talk of religion in a manner as if we were personally interested in it; and then, if after all this, we were to fall into those offences which we had professed our purpose to avoid, it were better that we had not professed." We cannot admit this conclusion, and we fear that pride lies deeper in the objection, than humility does, notwithstanding its fair appearance. Why cannot a faithful and devoted man humbly and gratefully acknowledge the interest he takes in religion, with the full purpose, at the same time, that if he falls into sins inconsistent with that acknowledgment, he will yet more humbly confess them? Why shall he not be willing, through resolutions and confessions, through endeavors and humiliations, to work out

his way to heaven? Why shall reproach be so dreaded a thing to a creature so frail and sinful, and who ought every day to reproach himself too deeply to be afraid of reproach from another?

Besides, avowal is one of the means which may have power to preserve him from falling into sin. Admit that it does not hold the highest place; yet if it has any power, is it for so weak a creature as man to dispense with it? There are moments of strong temptation, of blinding passion, when a man may forget, or lose sight of, his higher principles; and it is better that he should then remember his vows, and the stand he has taken before the world, than that he should remember nothing that will save him. Better surely than utter ruin is it, to be rescued by the fear of disgrace.

But in the last place, some will say, perhaps, that although the avowal proposed ought not to be precluded by modesty, or by the fear of falling into sin, yet that it would place them in an unfair position before society. "The eye of the world will be upon us," they may say, "and it will mark our slightest faults as gross offences. It will note every deviation from the strictest decorum and sobriety, every compliance even with the decent fashions and amusements of society, nay, every instance of innocent hilarity, as a monstrous inconsistency with our profession."

Admit that there is a degree of unreasonableness and superstition in the world on this subject; yet is it right to concede so much to unreasonableness and superstition as this objection proposes to do? Is it right, out of deference to these mistakes of the world, to neglect an otherwise acknowledged and binding duty, which we owe

to religion and to God? Besides, if the judgment of the world is wrong in this matter, the proper course is, not submission to it, but an endeavor to correct it. And nothing would be so effectual for this purpose, as a course of earnest and unquestionable piety, connected with a reasonable enjoyment of the pleasures of this life. Yet more; if there be unfairness and injustice in this opinion of the world, can we not estimate it for what it is worth? Can we not show some independence in the noblest of all causes? Can we not stand up firmly in the integrity of our own consciences? Can we not bear this slight wrong in the discharge of our duty? Can we not, I ask once more, — can we not take up thus far the cross of Christ, when we follow him?

In short, we contend for manifestation in the concerns of religion, as a duty very important to ourselves, to society, to the great cause, whose progress is the paramount interest of the world. The best hopes of this life, the only hopes of a future life, are bound up in this cause; and it ought to stand forth so prominently amidst our objects and pursuits, that none could mistake it, — that none could say of us, what is said of so many, that "they know not what our feelings are on that subject, or whether we make it a subject of any thought or interest whatever." This interest, this thoughtfulness, this solemn regard for things divine and eternal, if it exist in us, be it remembered, is itself invisible. No man knoweth it, till it is manifested by us; no human eye can pierce the depths of the soul where it first springs up; and it demands, therefore, of the kindling eye and the speaking countenance, of the eloquent lips and the uplifted hands, and of the solemn vow sworn upon the altar, to give it

expression. Religion should not wander through the world, unknown, unrecognised, hiding itself in corners, stealing through darkness and silence in its way to heaven. No; but it should walk forth, with its own noble air and mien, in its own atmosphere of light; coming to the light, so that its deeds shall be manifested that they are wrought in God. It is willing, and it ought to be seen, and known, and read of all men; to be an uttered speech and wisdom which none can gainsay; to be a manifested aim and purpose which none can misunderstand; to be a shining light and brightness, to which none can close their eyes.

Every thing else has manifestation among men; yes, formal and express manifestation; the spirit of gain, the spirit of ambition, the love of pleasure; they all have their avowals, their pledges, their forms. Why shall not the spirit of religion, in like manner, show itself and bind itself with vows and testimonies?

It hath more need than they; for it is liable to be overborne and buried, in the mass of earthly interests and vanities that from every quarter press upon it. We confess that a survey of the state into which men are every where fallen, or are exposed to fall, that a more careful estimate of the moral condition of society around us, that more reflection upon the fearful temptations and dangers that beset it, that a more thorough conviction, we may say, of the evils that prevail in the world, have led us to think more than we have formerly done, of the importance of giving what virtue, what piety there is in society, all the manifestation, all the power of manifestation which it is capable. The prospects of society, if in some respects they seem to be more promising than for-

merly, in others, appear more perilous. It will not yet do, if it will ever do, in this world, for good men to take their simple, separate, silent way to the grave. It will not do to dismiss from our system of moral discipline any means, however humble, of promoting the virtue and purity of the world. The flood of worldly maxims and practices that is sweeping through the earth threatens such danger, that all possible landmarks and barriers should be lifted up to stay its course. Souls are struggling in that mighty deep of human passions; and they should call to one another, and cheer one another in the perilous strife. They should, indeed, put forth their own strength, and pray to God for help; but they should, also, lay a hand upon every support, upon every floating plank, that will help to buoy them up. The conflict is brief, as well as perilous; all will soon be over; and moral safety, therefore, should be the engrossing and manifest concern. The blessed haven, where are rest and safety, lies within reach; but the dull tide will not float us thither, the strong arm of irregular and misdirected effort will not bear us to it, — nay, but we must plainly direct our course, and spread abroad our sail, and command and concentrate all power, action, mechanism, to the one great purpose. Thus does it become Christian men to live in this world; and thus doing, thus declaring their great aim, thus letting their light shine, may they hope to bear the greatest number of their fellow-beings with them to the heavenly land.

1st Series. No. 110.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

PERSONALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

By NOAH WORCESTER, D. D.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

SEPTEMBER, 1836.

Price 4 cents.

The following "Thoughts" were first published in the Christian Examiner.

Tuttle, Weeks & Dennett....Printers....17 School Street.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

PERSONALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

To do good and to get good should be the desire and the study of the living man, so long as God continues his mental faculties. At this period of life and with my infirmities it is but little that I can hope to do; but to do according to the ability which God giveth is all that he requires. He yet continues to me some portion of mental vigor, and a heart to delight in the study of his revealed will. Recently my thoughts have been employed on the supposed personality of "the Word"—"the Word of God." To write any thing like a thorough review of the subject would be more than I could reasonably hope to accomplish. I may, however, be enabled to record a selection of thoughts, which may be in some degree useful to myself, and to some portion of my fellow men. I will therefore hope in the mercy of God,—and, with reliance on him, proceed to state some facts and thoughts relating to the subject, which shall appear to me both true and important.

1. I freely admit that Jesus, the Messiah, was properly a person, anointed of God,—one in whom the Fa-

ther dwelt in a peculiar and intimate manner,—and that he is the person of whom it is said, "his name is called the *Word of God*."—Rev. xix. 13. Among the Jews it was a custom to give or assume significant names. The angel who appeared to Joseph, the reputed father of the Messiah, said to him, "Thou shall call his name Jesus,—for he shall save his people from their sins." As Jesus signifies Saviour, it was properly given to him whom the "Father sent to be the Saviour of the world." As bread is food for the body, so the truths of the Gospel are food for the soul. As Jesus was the medium through which God was pleased to communicate this food to men, the Messiah in one of his figurative discourses said to his hearers, "I am the BREAD OF LIFE"—"the BREAD OF GOD which came down from heaven"—"the LIVING BREAD." This was figurative language, and on the same principle he might be called the WORD OF GOD. When Jesus instituted the memorial of his death, he said—"This *cup* is the new Covenant in my blood." No Christian perhaps doubts, that by the *cup* Jesus meant the *wine* which the cup coutained; this was an emblem of his blood. The body or flesh of Christ was the Bread of life, in the same sense that the *wine* was called the cup. To give to a vessel the name of the thing which it contains is a common figure of speech.

2. What was written by John concerning the Word in the first chapter of his Gospel is supposed to have been the principal ground on which the hypothesis was formed, that by the Word is meant a second person in the Godhead. Had it not been for what John wrote, no such opinion perhaps would ever have been entertained. Cruden, the author of a celebrated "Concordance," was

much disposed to favor this hypothesis; yet he has marked but six cases in which he thought the WORD meant a divine person. Four of these are in the first chapter of John's Gospel. One is found in 1 John v. 7, — the text, which at this day is supposed to be spurious. The other is Rev. xix. 13, where the Messiah has his name "called the Word of God," as significant of his office, or the errand on which he was sent into the world. When on trial, Jesus said to Pilate; "To this end was I born, for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." This he did during his ministry; and this testimony he sealed with his blood.

3. Some learned men have supposed, that John employed the term *logos*, or Word, in a sense which he borrowed from Plato's philosophy; but who can admit this that duly considers how often the term "Word," had been used in the Old Testament? Unless John meant to mislead his readers, it is reasonable to believe that he used the term in its Scriptural sense. In the Old Testament as well as in the New, the Word is sometimes personified, or spoken of as though a person was intended. It is said "the Word of the Lord came" to one and another of the prophets, "saying." Then we are told what the Word said to them. Yet in the New Testament the matter is thus explained — "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 Peter i. 21. Who can doubt that what Peter ascribes to the Holy Ghost is the same that was ascribed to the Word in the Old Testament. It is true, that in both forms of speech the agency of a real person is implied; and that person was Jehovah, the living Father. He came by his Word or spirit, and taught the prophets, what they should say or write. Had

it been written "Jehovah came to Jeremiah saying,"—and then by Peter, that "holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Father," the meaning would, I believe, have been the same that was meant by the forms of speech adopted in the Bible. It is supposed, that David sometimes wrote by inspiration. Among his last words are the following. "The spirit of God spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just."—2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. Here, if I mistake not, we have four different forms of expressing nearly the same thing. What is said, spoken, or done, by "the spirit of the Lord," or "the Word," is spoken or done by "the God of Israel," and by "the Rock of Israel." What more does the whole amount to than this, that David spoke as he was taught by God, or by the spirit of God? Those who are fond of having a plurality of persons in the one God, may perhaps find four as clearly spoken of by David, as three are spoken of in any part of the Bible; "The spirit of the Lord, — the Word, — the God of Israel, — and the Rock of Israel." These four, it seems, united in teaching the same lesson — "He that ruleth over men must be just." May I then go forth and proclaim that the one God is four distinct persons?

4. Is not the term Word, as well as the Spirit, of the neuter gender? are not its pronouns, *it*, *its*, *it*, not *he*, *his*, *him*, when they are grammatically given, except in a very few instances of personification? Had the rule of grammar now in view been duly observed in the common translation of the first chapter of John's Gospel, how very little there would have been of even the appearance, that by the Word, was meant a person distinct from the

God mentioned in the first verse. In translating the first four verses Dr Campbell has observed the rule of grammar, which requires the pronoun to "agree with the noun in gender and number." The following is his translation :—"In the beginning was the Word ; and the Word was with God ; and the Word was God. *This* was in the beginning with God. All things were made by *it*, and without *it* not a single creature was made. In *it* was life, and the life was the light of men."—So far is this translation from representing the Word as a person equal with the Father, that there is scarcely the shadow of personification.

In further speaking of the last clause of the first verse Dr Campbell says ;—"The old English translation, authorized by Henry VIII., following the arrangement used in the original, says 'God was the Word.'" Perhaps this more correctly expresses the meaning of John, than saying, "the Word was God." John probably meant, that God was manifested in or by his word, — that word by which he spoke the world of creation into existence.

5. In my opinion Dr Campbell was correct in saying that in the first verse "there was a manifest allusion to the account given in the first chapter of Genesis, where we learn that 'In the beginning God made all things by his Word,' God said 'and it was so.'" — But may I suppose that a "God *said*," or a word spoken by the Almighty, was a distinct person equal to himself ? — It is my opinion, that by what John said of the Word in this chapter he meant to teach Christians, that the same Almighty power, by which God in the beginning spoke the natural light into existence, had been caused to dwell in Jesus as the Messiah, to establish his mission as divine,

that he might be the spiritual light of the world, — the light of men.

In other words, I think John meant to teach, that the same divine Power, Word, or Spirit, which gave existence to the first creation, had been displayed in the new creation, and that both were equally the works of God. The divine Word, or all-sufficiency of God, having been caused to dwell in Jesus as the Messiah, John proceeds to say ; " We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." Here we have the Word dwelling in the Messiah, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. The all-creating Word, the spirit not by measure, the fulness of the Godhead, and the Father dwelling in Christ, seem to me but different forms of expressing the same thing, each denoting the all-sufficiency which it pleased the Father should dwell in his Son. Nor have I the least doubt, that the Messiah was as all-sufficient as he could have been by union with a second person of Deity equal to the Father. Christ said expressly " The Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." If all fulness dwelt in the Father, and he dwelt in Christ, what more could be necessary either to the dignity or the sufficiency of the Messiah ? What addition is made to either by the hypothesis, that Jesus was united to a second person equal with the Father ? The hypothesis seems to me adapted to confuse the minds of men, and greatly to obscure the real glory of the Messiah.

6. In the 4th verse of John's Gospel we thus read concerning the Word — " In *it* was life, and the life was the light of men." While this Word dwelt in Christ he said, " I am the light of the world," — " The words which I

speak, they are spirit and they are life." It was by his words, by revealing the truths of the gospel, that Jesus was the light of the world. By the all-creating word of his power God gave life to the various tribes of animals. So when he had caused this Word to tabernacle in the flesh, Jesus was enabled to give natural life to some who had been dead; and to give spiritual life to many who had been dead in trespasses and sins. By the indwelling of the Father, — by his Spirit or Word, Jesus could say, "I am the resurrection and the life." The power of the divine Word was as really displayed when Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth," as when "God said, Let there be light." In both cases the effects corresponded with the mandate, —with the Almighty Word.

7. It may be proper to inquire whether the Scriptures do not afford further evidence, than has yet been brought to view, that John, in the first of his Gospel, alluded to the first chapter of Genesis in what he said of the Word, and not to any hypothesis of a plurality of persons in the Deity. In speaking of the scoffers who are to appear in the last days, Peter says; "For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water, whereby the world that then was, being overflowed, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same Word are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and the perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6, 7. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were made by the Word of God." Heb. xi. 3. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the *breath* of his mouth." Ps. xxxiii. 6. In each of these passages there is probably

an allusion to what is recorded in the first chapter of Genesis. To what other Scriptures could either of these writers have referred? They all, doubtless, had in view some well-known passage of scripture which related to the creation of the heavens and the earth; and I know not of any other which seems so probable as the account in Genesis. In the latter part of the verse quoted from the thirty-third Psalm, the "breath" of the Lord is the same as the spirit of the Lord; and is nearly the same as the "Word of the Lord" in the first part of the verse, as our words are the same as the breath by which they are formed.

By the call of Christ—"Lazarus, come forth," life was given to a corpse which had been dead four days. Suppose that in another account of this event we should read that the Word of Christ raised Lazarus from the dead; might we hence infer, that the word of Christ is a second person of the Messiah, equal with Jesus? If not, why should we from similar language infer, that God and his Word are two distinct persons? Whatever is done by the Word of a man is done by the man; in the same way we should infer, that what is done by the Word of God, or by the spirit of God, is done by God himself. All this is according to the the common acceptation of language. When a writer departs from this use of language, he either writes incorrectly, or he uses the words in a figurative sense.

8. God communicates his revelations to us in the language of men, and we must suppose that he uses words in a sense known to men, or they would not contain revelations. For they would be to us words without meaning, and could communicate to us no idea. God is

to us invisible, and we can have no idea of the manner in which effects are produced by him, otherwise than by supposing something pertaining to him analagous to those members or properties by which effects are produced by us. Hence God is represented in the Scriptures as having eyes and ears, arms, hands, fingers and feet, — a mouth, a tongue, lips, breath, and speech or Word. By the use of such members, or properties, we produce effects; and God is represented as producing effects in a similar manner. Yet it is possible, and perhaps probable, that what is called his spirit, includes all that is meant by most of the members he is represented as possessing, — such as his arms, hands, fingers, his mouth, breath, and word. For it is very certain that these are often used as synonymous with his spirit. His arm, hand, finger, breath, and word, are expressive of his power; and so is his spirit and his word. In Matt. xii. 28, Christ is represented as saying, "If I by the *spirit* of God cast out devils." In Luke xi. 20, the same idea is thus expressed, "If I by the *finger* of God cast out devils." What then can be more certain, than that in such cases the *spirit* of God means the same as the *finger* of God. So a man's spirit or power may often be represented as his hand or finger; or that may be ascribed to a man's hand or finger which is effected by his breath, spirit, energy, or word.

9. Every member or property of a man may be personified and spoken of as though it was a distinct person. How often do we personify his arm, his hand, his mouth, his tongue, his breath, and his word. To each of these human agency is often ascribed, as though they were personal agents. In like manner, the arm, the hand, and the finger of God are personified, as well as his Word

and spirit, or breath. But when we personify the arm or hand of man, or his breath or his word, it is seldom, I believe, that learned men make such mistakes as to suppose that by these members, or personified properties, are really meant several distinct persons in one man. Why then, should they not evince equal wisdom, or equal candor, when the attributes or properties of God happen to be personified in the Scriptures? This would be no more than judging from analogy as to the meaning of Scripture personifications. But when they convert such personifications into real persons, do they not in fact depart from all known analogies in the use of language? And have they not as good ground for affirming that a man is three distinct persons as for affirming this of God?

We read of "the Word of Christ," and of "the Spirit of Christ," as well as of the Word and Spirit of God. We also are informed that the Messiah is "the image of the invisible God." If then, God is three distinct persons, why may we not infer that the Messiah is also three distinct persons.

10. Is it not a solemn truth that the Hand of God is more frequently personified in the Bible, than either his Word or his Spirit? Besides, one of the principal arguments to prove that the Word and the Spirit of God are persons equal with the Father is this, that the same divine works are ascribed to the Word and the Holy Spirit as to the Father, — and particularly the work of creation. Let us then see whether, on the same ground, the Hand of God should not be regarded as a fourth distinct person of the Godhead. Let Jehovah himself be the witness in this case. "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, for all these things

hath my HAND made." — Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. "Mine HAND also hath laid the foundations of the earth." — xlviii. 13. Hear too what God has said of his ARM, which perhaps implies the HAND. "Mine ARM shall judge the people, — and on mine ARM shall they trust." Can anything short of a person equal with God be competent to judge the people, or be to them a proper object of trust? Yet who has supposed the HAND or the ARM of God, to mean a distinct person equal with the Father? Full evidence can be produced from the Bible that the work of creation is ascribed to the Father, — to the Word of God, — to the Spirit of God, and to the Hand of God; why then have we not as good evidence that God is at least four persons, as that he is three? It is, however, my belief that as, when any work is ascribed to the Hand of Moses, or the Word of Moses, the meaning is the same as when it is ascribed directly to Moses; so, when any work is ascribed to the Word, the Spirit, or the Hand of the Lord, the meaning is the same as when it is directly ascribed to Jehovah himself. The explanation which has now been given respecting what is ascribed to the Hand of God, would doubtless be admitted as correct by those who believe that God is three persons. Let them then only extend the principle to what is ascribed to the Word and the Spirit of God, and they may find that the hypothesis that God is three persons is as needless as the hypothesis that he is four persons.

11. Suppose that, on an impartial examination of the Scriptures, the following facts should be discovered as unquestionably true; — That in as many as thirty instances God is styled "the Holy THREE of Israel;" that in many other cases he is styled "the Holy THREE," or

"the high and lofty THREE," but never "the Holy One"; that, in speaking of themselves, the Holy THREE are accustomed to the use of this language; "*We* are the God; and besides *us* there is no God," "Thou shalt have no other gods before *us*;" that there are several thousands of pronouns for God, Jehovah, the Most High, all of which are in the plural form, excepting three or four, as *we*, *our*, *us*, — not *I*, *my*, *me*; that all the prayers and every ascription of praise, which are found in the Bible as addressed to God, are addressed to the Holy THREE, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. Now what would be thought of learned Christians who should treat all this evidence as nothing, and boldly subscribe a creed which declares that God is one person only? Should we not think we had good reason to say, that they are remarkably blinded by their prejudices? Suppose once more, that these Unitarians should not only treat as of no weight such a flood of evidence that God is Three, but also treat the believers in that doctrine as unworthy of the Christian name; would not such conduct not only grieve but astonish all candid and well-informed men?

In making the preceding suppositions, I have only supposed the reverse of what is in fact true, as to the evidence which the Bible affords that God is but one person. He is thirty times styled "the Holy ONE of Israel," many other times he is called "the Holy *One*," or "the high and lofty *One*." He says, "*I* am God; and besides *me* there is no God;" "Thou shalt have no other gods before *me*;" — and it is a solemn fact that every prayer, and every ascription of praise addressed to God in the Bible is addressed to him as one person only, and he is never styled or addressed as the Holy Three. I shall therefore

leave it to others to estimate the wisdom and candor of those who reject all this evidence, — subscribe a creed which declares God to be three distinct persons, and deny even the Christian name to those who believe that God is but one person.

12. For a long time it seems to have been taken for granted by a large portion of Christians, that the Word, as a distinct person of the Godhead, was united to Jesus of Nazareth, in a peculiar manner, and tabernacled in the flesh in such a sense as cannot be admitted or supposed to be true of the Father or the Holy Spirit. It may, therefore, be of great importance to inquire seriously, whether the Scriptures afford any clear foundation for this commonly received opinion. That the inquiry proposed may be answered correctly, I shall aim to exhibit the principal things which I have found in the Bible relating to the union of each of the supposed persons of the Godhead, with "the man Christ Jesus," or their dwelling in him.

First. In regard to the Word, we have the following declaration; "The *Word* was made flesh and dwelt among us." John i. 14. This, if I mistake not, is all or nearly all that can be found in the Scriptures, on which the opinion could have been founded, that the Word was in a peculiar manner united to the Messiah, so as to be with him one and the same person, and distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit, and of equal dignity with the Father.

What, then, is meant by the phrase "was made flesh"? It surely cannot be meant, that a person equal with the Father was transubstantiated, or changed into flesh. What intelligent person would not be shocked at such an hypothesis? Instead of "the Word was made flesh,"

Dr Campbell gives the following translation; "The Word became incarnate." Admitting this to be a correct translation, we have still to ask, What is meant by becoming incarnate? "Clothed with flesh, — embodied with flesh," is the definition of Johnson and Walker. Anything, therefore, may be said to be incarnate which dwells in flesh, or a human body, so as to be "clothed" or "embodied." Jesus spoke of his body as a "temple"; and it may perhaps be found, that the whole supposed family of divine persons equally dwelt in this temple, and were equally united to it.

Secondly. That the Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, was united to Jesus and dwelt in him we have abundant evidence. His title, the Messiah, or the Christ, is expressive of this union; for it means "the anointed," and we are assured that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost." This anointing was foretold by Isaiah. John the Baptist had a sign or token revealed to him by which he was to know the Messiah. This token was a visible emblem of the descent of the spirit in the form of a dove. Jesus was baptized by John, and, as he "went up straightway out of the water, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him." Of this event John says, — "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." He further testified, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth the Spirit not by measure unto him." To possessing the spirit of God, Jesus ascribed his power to cast out devils; "If I by the spirit of God cast out devils, the kingdom of God is come unto you." So perfectly was Jesus anointed with this Spirit, that he was enabled to baptize his Apostles, or

endow them with miraculous powers. As an emblem of the manner in which they were to be baptized or immersed, Jesus "*breathed* on them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." As the spirit of God and the breath of God mean the same thing, this may account for his breathing on them as an emblem of the manner in which they were to be baptized with the Spirit. This Holy Spirit was what he personified under the name of the Comforter, which he promised to send them to be their guide after his ascension. Of this Comforter he said to the Apostles, "He *dwelleth* in you and shall be in you." Suppose then, that we are to regard the Word and the Spirit as two divine persons, is it not a clear case, that we have much more said of the incarnation of the spirit, than the incarnation of the Word? By dwelling in Jesus, they equally became incarnate, — became embodied, or dwelt in human flesh, as in a temple consecrated by God to the purpose of manifesting his power, wisdom, and love.

Thirdly. What evidence have we that the Father was united to the Messiah and dwelt in him? In reply to this question, I shall regard the testimony of the Messiah himself as sufficient. During the memorable interview between Jesus and his Apostles, in the evening prior to his crucifixion, he made a remark which led Philip to say, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in

me; or else believe me for the very works' sake."—John xiv. 9, 10, 11.

No further testimony seems necessary to convince the impartial Christian that the Father dwelt in the Messiah in a most intimate and efficacious manner, so that the words uttered by Jesus were the words of the Father, and the miraculous works of Jesus were works which the Father "did by him."

For what important purpose, then, could it have been needful that one or two other divine persons should dwell in the Messiah? So far as either sufficiency or dignity was concerned, no addition would have been made by the indwelling of more than one infinite person. If the Father dwelt in Jesus by his own all-sufficient Spirit or Word, will not this account for all that is said of the union of the Word and Spirit with the Messiah? And does not this accord with Paul's testimony that "it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell"?

13. Having some further inquiries to make, I shall mention two rules, which to me seem of importance to be observed in our attempts to ascertain the meaning of difficult passages of Scripture.

First. When a text seems to present two or more meanings, we should inquire which of the different meanings appears less to accord with the unquestionable and general meaning of other passages of Scripture relating to the same question or subject.

Secondly. To ascertain the meaning of a particular text, or of particular words and passages, as used in relation to God or the Messiah, we should consider what would have been their meaning had they been used in regard to Moses or any other eminent person.

With these rules in view, the following inquiry may be proposed:

Was not the Messiah a person properly distinct from any other person who is represented as dwelling in him? Moses said to the Israelites, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me." The Spirit and the Word doubtless dwelt in Moses, for "The Law came by Moses," and God spoke by Moses. But was not Moses a person distinct from the Spirit or the Word? This will be answered in the affirmative. If then, the Messiah was like unto Moses, we may believe that he was truly a person distinct from the Word or the Spirit of God. But while I believe that Jesus was a person distinct from any person who dwelt in *him*, I think he was not the Messiah independent of God's anointing him with the Holy Spirit. By this anointing he became the Messiah, and was consecrated to that office. But as Moses was a person prior to his being endowed with miraculous powers, so I suppose it was with the Messiah.

When we read that the Father, the Word, or the Spirit dwelt in Jesus, the forms of speech clearly convey the idea that Jesus was a person distinct from any divine person, or divine attribute, which became united to him. When Jesus said, "The Father that dwelleth in *me*, *he* doeth the works,"—the *me* and *he* are evidently different persons. When a parent speaks of himself and his son, or a son speaks of himself and his father, two persons are always presented to our mind. So when any one person speaks of himself and another person as united with him, two different persons are ever brought to view.

We have, to say the least, as much evidence that the Father and the Spirit dwelt in Jesus, and were united to

him, as we have that it was so in regard to the Word. If then, like the Father, the Word and the Spirit are divine persons, will it not follow that in the Messiah there were four different persons, Jesus as one, and a Trinity of divine persons?

14. In view of the two rules of interpretation which have been mentioned, the following queries may be proposed with some confidence:

What appears to be the general meaning of the Bible in regard to the personality of the Word and the Spirit of God, and the number of persons in the Deity? As the Word and Spirit are nouns of the neuter gender, and have neuter pronouns, except in a few cases of personification, — and as the thousands of pronouns for God are of the singular number, except a very few doubtful cases, in which *us* is introduced; it seems to me that all candid and well informed persons must admit that the Word and Spirit are generally spoken of in the Bible as *not* persons, and God is generally represented as one person only. Such being the scriptural facts, a creed which denies or contradicts the general meaning of Scripture language, needs such clear and direct proof in its support to render it credible, as I am unable to find in the instructions of the Scriptures, or in any of the dictates of reason.

15. Another query is this, Is it not an undeniable truth, that what John said in a very few verses respecting the Word which was in the beginning with God, is nearly the whole ground on which the hypothesis was formed, that by the Word is meant a distinct person equal with the Father? And is it not also true, that what John recorded of our Saviour's figurative discourse relating to the Comforter, is the principal ground on which it has

been imagined that by the Spirit of God is meant a distinct person of the Godhead? It is believed that these queries will be answered in the affirmative by all candid Christians who have carefully examined the subject. Let it then be remarked, that John is supposed to be the last of the inspired men whose writings have found a place in the Bible. Is it then probable or credible, that John advanced doctrines relating to the personality of God which contradict what has been written on the same subject by Moses and the prophets? Is it not much more probable, that a few figurative expressions, or a few personifications, in his writings, have been misunderstood and misinterpreted by fallible and uninspired Christians? If John taught that the Word and the Spirit of God are two persons equal with the Father, and that God is in fact the Holy Three instead of the Holy One, he has not only taught what was not taught by any of his predecessors, but has contradicted what they taught for truth. If he has done so, have we not good reason to doubt his inspiration, or the inspiration of Moses, and all the prophets who represent Jehovah as the Holy One? Both parts of such a condition cannot be true. If the learned Jews are made to believe, that John so contradicted their lawgiver as to teach that there are three divine persons in the one God, equally worthy of supreme worship, can we wonder that they deny the inspiration of John? and if they believe, that John obtained his doctrine from the testimony of Jesus, have they not a better excuse for rejecting his Messiahship than any which they have been supposed to possess?

16. An error in regard to the number of persons to be worshipped as the true God, is surely an error of a very

serious nature. It is indeed pleaded by those who profess to worship three distinct persons, that they have but one object of supreme worship, because all the three persons are supposed to be but the one God. Is it not, however, equally true, that they profess to regard each of the three persons as the true God, and possessed of all divine perfections? Is it not also true, that one such *person* in one *object* of supreme worship? If so, does it not clearly follow that two such persons are two objects, and three distinct persons three distinct objects? I freely confess, that I have not discernment enough to perceive any incorrectness in these conclusions, except it may be on this ground, that the worshipper has no definite idea of what is meant in this case by persons, and of course worships the Father as but one intelligent being. But of what advantage can it be to profess to worship three *persons*, if we know not what is meant by the term? If any of us thus worship, may it not be truly said of us, "They worship they know not what."

I hope I shall never cease to praise God for his goodness in freeing my mind from what I now believe to be great errors respecting his personality. But, having known by experience the confusion and embarrassment of mind, which the triune views are adapted to produce, I wish ever to cultivate in my heart candid feelings towards those who still retain such views. While I regarded myself as a worshipper of one God in three persons, I am conscious that in general my worship was addressed to the Father only, as it now is, and to him as the only living and true God. So far as I am able to judge by the language I hear used in prayer by Trinitarians of the present day, I cannot doubt that in general their worship

is paid to the Father as mine formerly was, and as it is now. I therefore do not and cannot impute to them idolatry, or the worship of more Gods than one. God looketh on the heart, and I believe that honest Christians, of every sect, mean to worship one God only. Happy would it be for men, if they were more like God in judging one another.

1st Series. No. 111.

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

By EDWARD B. HALL.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

October, 1836.

Price 4 cents.

Tuttle, Weeks & Dennett....Printers....17 School Street.

THE

SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

One of the charges brought against that class of Christians denominated "liberal," is, that they exalt good works, that they rely upon them, and make them a ground of acceptance and condition of salvation. One of the charges brought against that class of Christians, denominated "orthodox," is, that they decry good works, that they sometimes denounce them, and make them of so little consequence that there is danger of their being neglected. There is probably as much reason for one charge as the other. The different language which different classes use, in treating of the same subject and perhaps aiming at the same point, produces a seeming difference of opinion, which in time may be magnified and exaggerated into an essential variance. Ask one man to define good works, and he will tell you they mean ceremonial observance and outward decorum. Ask another, he will say good works are good deeds, being good and doing good. It is easy to see why that man attaches little and why this man attaches great importance, to the same thing; or rather, to the same words. About the thing, they may not differ.

This we suppose to be true of very many on both sides

of the question. In this, as in a large proportion of all disputes, the difference is chiefly verbal, and a definition of terms would remove all cause, if not all spirit, of dissension. To define terms, therefore, to explain frequently, to take all pains to make ourselves understood and to understand others, becomes an obvious duty, whose performance may help the cause of charity and christian co-operation. This is one reason for our taking this subject.

It is not our only reason. We do not suppose that the difference on this subject, in the views of different Christians, is verbal only. We see an actual difference, if not in the estimate of good works properly defined, yet in the estimate which the Scriptures are supposed to put upon them. We think there are many who do not allow them, in whatever way defined, their proper place in the christian creed, or the christian life and hope. There are those of every name, and not least of the orthodox name, who seem to us to have very erroneous ideas of the *Scriptural Doctrine* of good works. Let this be examined, and it may then be seen, whether there is more danger of placing these works above, or below, the christian standard.

We appeal to the SCRIPTURES—from which there is no appeal. What do they teach on the subject? We answer the question, by mantaining the following positions. I. That the Scriptures never speak disparagingly or lightly of good works. II. That they often speak directly of good works, and strongly recommend them. III. That they bring good works into vital connexion with the first principles and truths of Christianity, such as regeneration, faith, forgiveness, and retribution. IV. As an inference,

that the doctrine of scripture on this subject accords with the doctrine of common sense, in teaching, that good works mean *working good.*

But before entering upon these propositions, there is a remark to be made, which has a bearing upon the whole. It relates to motives. We may be told, that however clearly the Scriptures recognise good works, as among the essential elements of the christian character and hope, such works only are meant as proceed from right motives — such indeed as are at once the result and the evidence of a true faith. And this, as a principle, we admit unreservedly. We regard it as a first principle. We wish it to be understoood in all that we say. That is, we wish it to be remembered, that we take motives into the account as a matter of course, and make them a part of the very definition of good works. No works are truly good, that do not spring from good motives. On this point we are so often misrepresented or misunderstood, that we call particular and candid attention to it, and desire that it may not be forgotten or questioned, because we do not give the explanation every time we use the term. Our object, it will be considered, is simply to exhibit the testimony of the Scriptures on this subject. And the Scriptures speak of good works, as such, without explaining or qualifying. They do not go into the question of motives. They leave that to be gathered from the character of the religion, and to be decided, in the case of every individual, by Him to whom alone "all hearts are open."

I. The Scriptures never speak disparagingly or lightly of good works. Of this the proof must necessarily be

negative. We assert the entire absence in scripture of all condemning or disparaging remarks as to good works. We call for a single passage that depreciates them, or tells us not to follow them, or not to trust them, or never to mention them. We know of none. We had supposed there might be such passages, because we have heard much in sermons that implied it, and much in common discourse that took it for granted. But we have never been able to find the passages themselves. Nor have we found any that could suggest the thought, or be made to convey this meaning even by an erroneous interpretation, unless we except a single passage in the Old Testament, and a single class of passages in the New. These we will examine.

The passage in the Old Testament is Isaiah lxiv. 6. "But we are all as an unclean thing, *and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;* and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." That part of the passage which we have italicised, is familiar to most ears as often quoted in proof of the vanity, if not the impurity, of deeds of righteousness. But what is the fact? As there is no mention of good works, we need not show that it does not condemn *them.* It condemns or rejects as worthless, "our righteousnesses"; that is, the righteousness of the Jews. For the Prophet is here speaking in the name of his dispersed and desolate countrymen. It is a prayer of confession, in which they are made to acknowledge their sins, to describe their external and ceremonial observances as unclean garments, and implore Jehovah "not to remember their iniquity for ever." The allusion in itself is altogether national and limited. But suppose it be general in its application, as

you may, suppose it to set forth a universal truth, in this or any view, it asserts nothing in regard to any actual good deeds. It speaks only of pretended good deeds, of assumed righteousness, of formality of service, without sincerity or truth. It speaks of hypocrisy, of iniquity. "Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."—"Thou hast consumed us, because of our iniquities," or, more accurately, "thou lettest us perish by our iniquities." Not only is there no rejection of true righteousness, there is a marked commendation of it. Immediately before the words so misunderstood, we read, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." As Noyes renders it, "Thou art the friend of those, who joyfully do righteousness; those who remember thee in thy ways." Thus from the whole passage we draw encouragement for well-doing, and discouragement and warning against evil-doing. Righteousness that begins and ends in forms, and fasts, and tithes, and robes, like the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, may be called "filthy rags." But there is little reason, and not a little ignorance and danger, in giving the name to any class of good qualities or good works.

The New Testament affords as little reason for such an application of the term, as the Old. It contains but one kind or class of passages, that can be supposed by any one to throw suspicion upon the value or acceptableness of good works. They are the passages in Paul's Epistles, which use the phrase, "our own righteousness," in opposition to the righteousness of God or Christ. Here, as before, there is no mention of good works, and it is a matter of inference only that any allusion to them is intended. In fact the allusion is to an entirely different

subject, and the honest Apostle would no doubt have smiled, to have been told that he was suspected of rejecting good works, because he labored to show the distinction between works of law and works of faith, or works by faith. That this is the design of the passages in question, is asserted by commentators of different views, and may be seen by all intelligent readers. The Jews required to be distinctly taught the difference, between obedience to the law of Moses, and obedience to the law of Christ. They must understand that "the righteousness which is of the law," that is, their law, or any law of mere outward observance, could not save them, without "the righteousness which is of God through faith," or christian obedience. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Rom. iii. 20. All, however, will not allow, that our interpretation of this passage, making it refer to the Jewish law particularly, is the true one. Probably many would strenuously oppose it. The more common, and, by reputation, orthodox interpretation, makes the word law there mean all law, any mere rule of right, or the moral law universally. And the passage last quoted is made to sustain the confident assertion, that mere *obedience* can never save any one, or be regarded as any ground of justification and acceptance with God.

As we are often told no such doctrine as this is now maintained, we must be allowed to produce one witness. We turn to the latest commentator of whom we have heard, and one who is supposed to be more liberal than most of his school. In *Barnes' Notes*, on the passage in Romans—"Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight," — we find the following

explanation, or declaration. "The conclusion is therefore a general one, that by no law, made known either by reason, conscience, tradition or revelation, could man be justified; that there was no form of *obedience* which could be rendered, that would justify men in the sight of a holy God."—Our first objection to such a conclusion would be, that it cuts off not merely works of law, but works of faith also. For faith is but one form of obedience. He who believes in the efficacy of Christ's death as the only ground of justification, does but *obey* what he supposes to be the law of God, the rule of right, given by Christianity. And if neither this obedience will authorize the hope of salvation, nor *any* obedience in his power, we see no hope for him. Our second objection to such reasoning is, that it makes Paul contradict himself, and overthrow an assertion which he had made too recently to have forgotten, if his readers forgot it. In the previons chapter, Rom. ii. 13, he writes — "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Yes, *shall be justified.* And to leave no doubt, and no room for mistake, he applies it to the Gentiles; and says that they, "having not the law" — no law but that of nature and reason, that very rule of right which is said to be wholly excluded — "are a law unto themselves" — and that "as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law;" i. e. without the condemnation of any law, except that which they possessed and violated — "and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;" by that law, in the knowledge of which they sinned, and by no other. A more equitable, reasonable principle was never laid down, or more clearly and charitably illustrated, than this by

the Apostle himself. We must be pardoned, if we prefer it to every other. And we must be indulged in one other objection to the doctrine that no works, no obedience, can be a ground of justification. For then there would be more reason than we are willing to suppose or able to see, for the alleged disagreement of Paul and James on this subject. For James does say — "ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only;" ii. 24. We suppose this Apostle here to mean by "works," the principle and the act of *obedience*, or practical righteousness. But we suppose Paul, when he says — "a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law," —Rom. iii. 28 — to be speaking, not of deeds or works generally, not, as was James, of obedience or righteousness, but of the works of a *ceremonial* law. Thus the two Apostles are easily reconciled; while we see not how they can be reconciled on the other mode of interpretation. In any case, we have the undeniable declaration of one Apostle, that "the doers of the law shall be justified" — and of another, that "by works a man is justified." And we believe the meaning of both to be, the doctrine of Christianity throughout, that "God will render to every man according to his DEEDS."

Our first position, then, is sustained. The Scriptures never slight or disparage good works. The only works they condemn, are works of hypocrisy and iniquity. The only ground of justification which they take from the doer of righteousness, is that which they take from the believer also — the ground of claim, or merit. That is absolutely and in all cases excluded. Salvation is *never* of debt, but of grace.

II. The second position is, that the Scriptures often speak directly of good works, and strongly recommend them. In proving this, we feel as if we were proving, that the Bible is a good book and recommends good actions. In fact the whole task seems much like establishing a truism — that good is good, and therefore good works are good. We should be quite ashamed to be found at this play, if we did not remember what a curious creature man is, and how strangely he yields himself to the bias of system, education, and a thoughtless use of familiar language. Not seldom have these brought him to imagine, that that which is true in every other relation, may not be true in the province of religion. They certainly have led him sometimes to deny, that goodness is piety, or that being good is being religious. And we venture the assertion, that many who have read the Scriptures all their days, have no idea of the frequent, emphatic, and laudatory manner, in which they name good works, and urge their performance as a high part of christian service. We may be allowed therefore to adduce a few instances, without comment.

Our Saviour introduces the subject in his early teaching. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Paul prays that "our Lord Jesus Christ, and God even our Father, may establish us in every good work." He recommends that "women be adorned with good works," and that "the rich be rich in good works." He tells us that scripture itself is given, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." He tells Timothy, that the man "who is meet for the master's use, will be prepared unto every

good work." He exhorts Titus, to "show himself a pattern of good works, and gives him the special charge, which we do not always hear given now — "these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works." Peter hopes that good works will be made both to silence opposers and to glorify God; that men will be compelled, "by your good works which they shall behold, to glorify God in the day of visitation." Indeed good works are named as the mark of Christ's peculiar people, and the end of his own death, the nature or effect of the redemption he purchased; as in Titus ii. 14; "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*."

Passages of the same tenor abound, particularly in the New Testament. They convey the spirit of the Gospel, and the burden of the Apostles' teaching and preaching. We have but one remark here to make upon them. They should prevent every one from charging others with being "preachers of good works" as if it were a reproach, or as if it must not be laid to the charge of the first teachers of the Christian religion.

III. We pass to the third position, as another view of the same fact, but sufficiently important to be considered distinctly. It is, that the Scriptures not only recommend good works, but bring them into a connexion which shows that they are a part and an essential part of the first principles and fundamental doctrines of Christianity. In a vague and yet restricted sense, this is probably believed by all, and would be allowed without proof. But all are not aware, we apprehend very few, comparatively, are aware,

of the peculiar and evidently designed relation, which good works are made by the sacred writers to bear, to the vital doctrines of our religion. This is worth considering, apart from all polemics, that we may feel the indispensable importance of action in the Christian, and of active goodness — of *works*, and of *good works*.

1. *Regeneration* is a primary doctrine of Christianity. It is the being born to a new life by the power of a new religion — ushered into a new world of thoughts, affections, relations and obligations. Now all these are comprised, by an apostle, in that very phrase whose import we are considering; as a single passage will sufficiently show — Eph. ii. 10. — "For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The ordaining purpose of God, the regenerating power of Christ, and the character of the new workmanship, or the Christian himself, are here expressed by that one term — "good works."

2. *Faith* is a primary doctrine, a vital principle of Christianity. Observe the connexion in which it stands, and what is declared essential to make it a ground of hope. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."—"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."—"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." These are remarkable declarations, though very familiar. They leave no room for doubt. They give no permission to exalt faith above

works. They make the latter quite as important, to say the least, as the former. Or, what is nearer the truth and more to our purpose, they make faith and works inseparable, identical. The apostle represents even the principle that actuated Abraham, as of works; and declares that his faith was made perfect by works, and that he himself was "justified by works."

3. *Justification.* This, though a scriptural and expressive term, has been so darkened by words without knowledge, that it may be better here to use a more common and intelligible term; as pardon or acceptance. And here we might adduce some striking passages from the Old Testament. All those which express this sentiment of Isaiah, are to the point: — "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Ezekiel tells us, that the man who turneth from his sins, "and doeth that which is lawful and right," shall surely live." Why, or how shall he live? "In his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live;" yea, "if he doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive," — a most pointed and emphatic assurance. Passing to the New Testament, we find Paul declaring, that there is "glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good." We find him appealing exultingly to his own past life, mentioning his good works as if they had something to do with his hopes and his reward. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me, a crown, &c." We find Cornelius, a heathen, not then converted, called a devout man on account of his past deeds, and

miraculously assured that his good works had been marked and accepted; "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." From this fact, we find Peter drawing the same inference that we draw, and in the same language — "in every nation, he that feareth God and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with him." We find numerous declarations, like one already cited, which show that the final award will turn upon the works done. "God will render to every man according to his deeds." — "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor." — "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

4. This connexion with *retribution*, into which works are especially and repeatedly brought in the Scriptures, deserves close attention. It is the only principle of retribution divinely established. It is the only feature, distinctly revealed to us, of that fearful event, that tremendous day, which we call "the judgment." And it is revealed by him who spake as never man spake. He tells us, in ways many and solemn, with the wisdom and authority of God, how much our forgiveness or rejection, our salvation or condemnation, will depend upon our *works*. There is no reserve in his manner of speaking on this subject. There seems no reluctance to throw everything on this single test. Nor does he think qualification necessary, or any explanation. He tells us plainly, that "the Son of man will come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man *according to his works*." He proportions the forgiveness of God, to our forgiveness of one another:

"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."—"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive yours." He allows us or rather teaches us, to connect our own acts of mercy with our supplication for the mercy of God; "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." He illustrates the nature of probation, and defines the principle of retribution, by the plain parable of the Talents; where nothing but works are named, where fidelity is pleaded by the faithful servants and accepted by their Lord, where the slothful servant is condemned on no other ground but idleness and unfaithfulness, and where the loud commendation comes from the Lord himself — WELL DONE, *good and faithful servant!* The parable of the Virgins, in the same chapter, proceeds on the same principle. And we ask attention to the fact, that these two parables, and a third now to be noticed, make up the whole of the 25th chapter of Matthew, which, with the preceding chapter, contains the only particular descriptions given in scripture of the day of judgment, and the principles on which the final sentence will be passed. The other parable referred to, begins thus impressively: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." And on what principle will he separate them? On what part of the character of the multitudes before him, will the Judge fix, in pronouncing their doom? What will he call up to their own recollection, what announce to the gathered universe, what assign as the ground of acceptance or rejection? This, and this alone — their good and bad *works*. No other

ground is named. No other condition is suggested. Not a single cause of salvation or condemnation is introduced, but this. It is the kind, the benevolent, the merciful and faithful, who are admitted to the kingdom. It is the unkind, the selfish, and the faithless, who are excluded. Observe, too, the open and distinct manner, in which the good deeds of the former are recounted, and declared by the Judge of all to be the subjects of reward: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; *for* I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," &c.

Such are the pictures, drawn by our Lord himself, of the coming judgment. We do not suppose them to be literal delineations, or intended as exact descriptions of the spiritual world. But we do believe, as every believer in Christ must, that they set forth the great law of christian retribution. We consider it most remarkable, that so minute a description should have been given by Christ, the appointed Judge of the world, and that salvation itself should be awarded by him on the declared condition of good works — most remarkable, if good works are never to be mentioned in such connexion, and never to be thought of as a possible ground of acceptance. We think all that we have here seen, to be utterly irreconcileable with such a doctrine or feeling, as is implied in the following question asked by a recent and eminent writer: "Do you place any reliance for mercy upon your reformation, your prayers, your religious efforts, your attention to religious duties, or any works or feelings of your own?"* Of such sentiments, more or less strong, it were not difficult to find any number, in bodies

* Bp. McIlvaine.

of divinity, articles of faith, works of controversy, commentaries and sermons, old and new. But we do not wish thus to extend this essay, or give it a sectarian complexion. Nor would we, if we could, lead any to suppose that those Christians who say such things, really think good works of no consequence, or assert that any creed or faith will be accepted without them. We are sure they neither say nor think this, though we do not know exactly what they do think. Their own lives, the whole conduct of the very men and sects who are most noted for using such language as we have just quoted, show that they do not receive it literally, or follow it out in life. For no men or sects are more active in religion, or abound more in good works, or exhort more to their performance. And it is this inconsistency that surprises us. There seems a reluctance to allow to works their true place in christian duty, and the formation of the christian character and hope. There is an apparent want of faithfulness and fearlessness, in declaring this part of the counsel of God; and language is used and views given, which are not scriptural or useful. If it be said, that there is danger in commending good works and building hopes upon them, it is enough to reply at present, that our Saviour and the Apostles seem not to have thought it dangerous. We may surely, we surely ought to go as far as they went, to take their descriptions, use their words, and encourage all hopes which they encouraged; guarded by their sanctions.

IV. Our last position is little more than an inference from the foregoing. That inference is, that the doctrine of scripture on this subject is very simple, and accords

entirely with the teachings of reason and common sense. The doctrine is substantially this — *good works mean working good.* Good works express all that a man can *do*, to form and increase his faith, to express his gratitude and penitence, to make others happy and himself holy. This is our view of the subject, our inference from scripture and life. So long as we hold this view, it can neither occasion surprise nor involve danger, that we insist upon works, attach to them great importance, and connect them closely with salvation. As we understand by them almost the same as obedience, we cannot give them too high or large a place. They are in truth the conditions of salvation. They are not the cause of salvation. The distinction is palpable. Why is it overlooked? God's love is the cause of salvation. Or, to extend the view, the compassion and grace of the Father, the gospel, life and death of Christ, are the cause of salvation. Faith, repentance, and obedience are the conditions. Tillotson entitles one of his discourses, "Christ the Author, and Obedience the Condition, of Salvation." This is the point and the sum of the doctrine. It is only necessary to add to it, in explanation, that Christ is the author of salvation only to "them that obey him." Even his death does not secure salvation, except as it secures a compliance with the terms of salvation — *obedience.* Its efficacy lies in the grace of which it assures us, the conviction of sin which it works in us, the sublime revelations, sanctions, truths, fears and hopes, which it brings to act upon the *soul*, filling it with penitence, warming it with the love of God and Christ and man, inspiring it with the purpose of entire devotion to truth and piety — thus "making it perfect in every good word and work."

Such being, in our view, the scriptural doctrine of good works, it only remains that we anticipate and answer one objection, which is apt to be made to all such views. It is said that where these views are entertained, there is great danger that men will make a *merit* of their works. Is it enough considered, that, with other views, there may be danger that men will make a merit of their *faith?* And is there any more reason, or any less evil, in the latter than in the former? We can see no reason for either. We can see no room, with any faith or any life, for the least thought of merit or ground of claim. No, not a shadow of claim can ever be raised upon works, nor a shadow of claim upon faith. No merit can the best man find in anything he has done, no merit in anything he has believed. He cannot stand upon his repentance or obedience to demand salvation, he cannot stand upon any or all doctrines to demand salvation. There can be no demand, no merit, no claim, in any possible case. They are excluded by the very circumstances of our nature, the character of our lives, and the principles of our religion. That religion calls for all the service that an existence can give — and who gives it? That religion condemns all sin — and who is free from sin? That religion opens to us spheres of light wide as creation, treasures countless as the moments of eternity. It reveals to us a God almighty to protect, a Father all gracious and waiting to bless. It sends a Saviour, the Son of God, the image of God, the power and wisdom of God, full of grace and truth, to live a to die for us. It issues a mandate, at which death itself dies, and yields its godlike prisoner, who ascends to intercede for us. It hallows seasons, it appoints ordinances,

it offers helps, it multiplies privileges, it imparts holy influences, it utters solemn warnings, it inspires immortal hopes — it invokes the powers of nature, the voices of earth, the wealth of worlds, the fears of hell, the joys of heaven, the mysteries of eternity — all for this: to wake souls that are slumbering in indifference, to startle those who are mocking the Eternal, to fire with love and thrill with hope all who have not forgotten their Father nor trodden under foot their Redeemer, to draw to God and glory all who do not refuse to come, however humble, however worthless.

This is the religion given us. These are its means and sanctions, this its purpose, its power, and its proffered salvation. Where then is claim? Where is merit? Never look for them. Never breathe the thought of them. Humility, penitence, prostration in the dust from which your body is taken, and in which your soul is so prone to grovel, these most become you, as a mortal and a sinner, absolutely dependent and unspeakably favored, all encompassed with love, yet all unworthy. And the more unworthy you are, the more are you bound to use, thankfully and humbly, all the means furnished, and to comply with all the conditions annexed, for your redemption. Believe in the necessity of these means, and the solemnity of these conditions. Regard the duty of exertion, as one of the first duties of life and religion. Look upon religion as an active principle, not entering from without into a passive recipient, but formed within by meditation, prayer, and christian purpose, then availing itself of all external helps, putting forth all present and increasing energies, seeking and using all opportunities of doing good to others and rendering glory to God. Believe

these to be good works. Connect with them all that a man and a Christian can do, separate from them all thought of merit or possibility of claim. Then give yourself to the performance of these works, with all the powers that God has breathed into your soul, and all the light that Christ has thrown upon your duty and destiny. In such a purpose, apprehend no danger. In such a work, fear no excess. Fear everything else more. Fear idleness, selfishness, thoughtlessness, worldliness, fear presumption, prejudice, passion, procrastination, fear waste of mind, neglect of means, abuse of privilege and power, hardness of heart, corruption of life, forgetfulness of God, ingratitude to Christ — fear all sin, all evil-doing — but fear not GOOD WORKS.

1st Series. No. 112.

ON THE

USE AND MEANING

OF THE

PHRASE "HOLY SPIRIT."

By HENRY WARE, D. D.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

NOVEMBER, 1836.

Price 4 cents.

The following Tract appeared originally in the Christian Disciple.

Tuttle, Weeks & Dennett....Power Press....17, School Street.

USE AND MEANING

OF THE

PHRASE "HOLY SPIRIT."

THERE is perhaps no term or phrase of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, with which readers in general are more perplexed, and concerning the meaning of which they feel more doubtful, than that of "*holy ghost*," or "*holy spirit*." We see the words printed in our Bibles, and in other books in capitals, or with capital initials, and it gives us the impression of a person or agent of high dignity; at the same time that the connexion in which it stands, and the scope of the passage, often assures us, that a person cannot be intended.

Two observations occur in the outset in our examination into the use and meaning of *holy spirit*, in the writings of the New Testament. The first is that we find several other forms of expression, such as *spirit of God*, *spirit of the Lord*, *spirit of Christ*, and *spirit*, alone, to be used in the same sense as *holy spirit*, or *holy ghost*. The following is an example, in which three of the above phrases are, in a single sentence, used to mean the same thing, whatever it be, as "the holy ghost," which is in other passages often represented to be in Christians, and to dwell in them.* "Ye are not in the

* Rom. viii. 9.

flesh, but in the *spirit*, if so be that the *spirit of God* dwell in you; now if any man have not the *spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. But if Christ be in you," &c.

The second observation is, that we do not find the phrase in question, nor either of the synonymous phrases to have one uniform sense in which it is always used. On the contrary, we soon discover, when we come to read with a careful attention to its use, that it has several meanings, which in each case are to be learned only from the connexion in which it stands, and the scope of the passage in which it is found.

This observation will be supported by mentioning a few of the several senses, in which it may be shewn, that the *holy spirit*, and other parallel phrases are used by the sacred writers.

1. In the first place, each of the phrases in question is sometimes used for *God himself*. The true meaning, in this use of it, the more readily occurs on account of its analogy to a similar mode of expression, which we have in constant use. I mean *the spirit of a man*. Now by the *spirit of a man* or a *man's spirit*, no one ever dreams of anything else being intended but the *man himself*. "I am glad," said Paul to the Corinthians,* "of the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaiacus, for they have refreshed *my spirit* and *yours*." That is, they have refreshed *me* and *you*. Equally obvious is the meaning of the following texts: † "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with *your spirit*." ‡"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," i. e. be *with thee*. Again, §"What man knoweth the things of a man, save the *spirit of a man*, that is in him?" In this as in the preceding instances, we are at no loss what we are to

* Cor. xvi. 17, 18. † Gal. vi. 18. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 22. § 1 Cor. ii. 11.

understand by the *spirit of a man.* It is the man himself. Now when proceeding in the use of the same language, he says in the following verse, "even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the *spirit of God;*" can there be any doubt, whether he applies the same language in a similar manner, meaning by it, none but *God himself* knoweth them?

This use of *holy spirit* and *spirit of God,* we meet with not unfrequently in the Old Testament.* "Whither shall I go from *thy spirit?*" i. e. from *thee;* for he immediately adds; "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there." The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the ingratitude of the people of Israel to God for their distinguished blessings, says, "They rebelled and vexed *his holy spirit.*" By comparing this passage with others in which the same conduct is referred to, we are left at no loss in what sense we are to understand *his holy spirit* here. Thus in the history of the transactions,‡ we learn that, when the Israelites, hearing the report of those, who had been sent forward to search the land of Canaan, were on the point of revolting and returning back to Egypt, "The Lord said unto Moses, how long will this people provoke *me?*" And in the Psalms which were composed in reference to these same transactions, in which this spirit of ingratitude or rebellion, which burst forth on several occasions, is alluded to; it is said,§ "They tempted and proved the *Most High God.*"|| "Your fathers tempted *me,* provoked *me,* and saw *my works.*" These passages are evidently parallel, and intended to convey the same meaning. The historian, the sacred poet, and the

* Psalm cxxxix· 7. † lxiii. 10. ‡ Num. xiv. 11.
§ Psl. lxxviii. 56 || Psl. xcv. 9.

prophet, referring to the same transaction, unquestionably meant to represent *the same person*, as the object of it, by the several terms, *Jehovah*, *Most High God*, and *his holy spirit*.

That this is the most usual meaning of *the spirit of God* in the Old Testament, I believe will hardly admit a question. It is also as uniformly the meaning of *my spirit*, *his spirit*, and *thy spirit*, whenever they occur in reference to God. When God speaks of *his spirit*, we have as little apprehension that another person, distinct from the speaker, is intended, as when a man speaks of his spirit. Nor is this use of *the spirit of God*, and the *holy spirit*, confined to the Old Testament. Very clear and decisive instances of it occur in the New. "Know ye not," says Paul,* "that your body is the temple of the holy ghost?" That by the *holy ghost* is here meant *God* himself, appears from two or three parallel passages.† "Know ye not that ye are the temple of *God?*"‡ "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them."

2. There is in the second place, a class of texts, in which the phrases in question appear to be used, not to express the *person* of God, as in the preceding cases, but the *power* of God, his *wisdom*, his *will*, or his *command*.§ "Is the *spirit* of the Lord straitened?"|| "Behold the Lord's *hand* is not shortened, that it cannot save." These texts are evidently parallel, intended to express the same meaning. There can be no doubt that the former prophet, by the *spirit of the Lord*, meant the

* 1 Cor. vi. 19. † 1 Cor. iii. 16. ‡ 2 Cor. vi. 16. § Mich. ii. 7.
|| Is. lix. 1.

same, as the latter did by the *Lord's hand*, viz. *his power*. Is the power of Jehovah restrained ?

In one of the eloquent replies of Job,* a remarkable instance occurs, in which, speaking of the majesty of God, and his wonderful works, the turn of expression is varied four times, without changing its meaning, in a single sentence. "He divided the sea by his *power*, and by his *understanding* he smiteth through the proud : by his *spirit* he hath garnished the heavens, his *hand* hath formed the crooked serpent." The intelligent reader needs no comment on this passage. He understands the same divine operation to be expressed, and not four distinct persons to be intimated, by the several terms *power*, *understanding*, *spirit*, and *hand*. In a similar manner, in the following passage,† "By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the *breath* or *spirit*, of his mouth," — he understands the *word*, in one part of the sentence, and the *breath* or *spirit* in the other, to mean the same thing, viz. that divine energy by which all things were brought into being. It may be proper, however, to inform the reader, unlearned in polemic divinity, that this interpretation is not assented to by all. Some have discovered in this text the three persons of the trinity : the first person, the Father, designated by the term *Lord*, or *Jehovah ;* the second, or the Son, by the *word ;* the third, or the *Holy Ghost*, by the *breath* or *spirit*.

Whether such interpretations are calculated to do honor to the Scriptures, the common sense of sober inquirers will determine.

* xxvi. 12. 13. † Psl. xxxiii. 6.

Our Saviour, reasoning with the Jews respecting his authority as a divine teacher, and the power by which he wrought miracles, said to them, * "If I cast out demons by the *spirit* of God, then is the kingdom of God come unto you." By another Evangelist,† he is represented on the same occasion, as saying, "If I with the *finger* of God cast out demons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." The two forms of expression then, *spirit of God*, and *finger of God*, were understood by the Evangelists to mean the same thing. What that meaning was, we learn from our Saviour, when he said on another occasion,‡ "The *Father* that dwelleth in me, he doth the works." We have it confirmed also by Peter, in his speech on the day of Pentecost.§ "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and signs, and wonders, which *God did* by him." The *spirit of God* then, and *the finger of God*, were the *power of God*, or God himself, the Father, dwelling in Jesus Christ.

Similar examples of the use of the *spirit of God* for the *power of God*, might be multiplied. One more only shall be mentioned.|| "Ye are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the *spirit* of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." The allusion in this text is to the two tables received by Moses on Monnt Sinai, on which were written the ten commandments. Now turning to the account of this transaction in Exodus and Deuteronomy,¶ we find them there declared to be written with the *finger of God*. The Apostle therefore probably

* Mat. xii. 28. † Luke xi. 20. ‡ John xiv. 10. § Acts ii. 22.
|| 2 Cor. iii. 3. ¶ Ex. xxxi. 18. Deut. ix. 10.

meant the same thing, when he said, written by the *spirit of God*. Each was intended to express an effect produced supernaturally, by the power of God himself.

3. The terms under consideration are used, again, sometimes to express a single gift or endowment, such as *power*, *wisdom*, *courage*, or *skill* in some art, — whether properly miraculous, or only possessed in an extraordinary degree, so as to qualify the person for some special office or service. Thus is the bodily strength of Samson spoken of, and the impulse by which he exerted it; the valor and intrepidity of Othneil, of Jephtha, and of Gideon, in conducting the armies of their country, and delivering it from the power of its enemies. In each instance it is said, the spirit of the Lord came upon him.*

A similar mode of expression is applied to Moses and Joshua in reference to the wisdom and skill, with which they conducted the nation, administered its affairs, and settled it in the promised land. Particularly, when the seventy elders were appointed to relieve Moses from a part of the burden of government of which he complained, as being greater than he could bear.† The Lord said unto Moses, I will take of the *spirit*, which is upon thee, and will put it upon them." There can be no doubt, I think, what is here meant. It was not that something was literally to be taken from Moses on that occasion, and given to the elders who were to be his assistants; nor that an exalted person or being was to depart from him, and reside in them. They were to be qualified for the office to which they were to be appointed and fitted for its duties, by possessing talents resembling

* Judges xiv. 5, 6. iii. 10. xi 29. vi. 34. † Num. xi. 16, 17

his; by being endowed, as he was, with eminent wisdom, integrity, meekness and impartiality.

Another instance of a similar application of the phrase *spirit of God*, occurs in the account we have of the designation of persons to construct the tabernacle and its furniture. It is applied to that ingenuity and mechanical skill, by which Bezaleel and Aholiab were qualified to superintend the work, and to understand all the directions, and to execute the commands which Moses had received. It was said,* "That they were filled with the *spirit of God*, in wisdom and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, in cutting of stone, in carving of wood, in the work of the engraver, the weaver and the embroiderer." Expressions of similar import are applied also, to all those, whom they were directed to teach the skill which they possessed in these arts, and to employ as assistants in executing the work.

In the writings of the prophets, the expressions continually occur of "giving, sending, pouring out the *spirit of God*," not in such a manner as to lead to the thought, that a person is intended; but sometimes to express the grant of a gift, power, privilege, or blessing, and sometimes a disposition produced, temper imparted, or change of moral character.

A similar application of the language and terms in question runs through the New Testament. They are used to express the power, by which our Saviour performed miracles in proof of his divine mission; and the powers and gifts also, which were imparted to his Apostles after his ascension, by which they were qualified to

* Ex. xxxi. 1, 7. † Ex. xxxvi. 1, 2.

go forth into the world, with knowledge and courage to execute their commission, and with supernatural powers to support their claims as divine messengers; to prove* that they were sent into the world by Christ, as he was sent into the world by the Father.

What was meant by the promise of the *Comforter*;† the *holy ghost* with which they were to be baptised; ‡ they learned, when they found themselves, after the ascension of their master, endowed with supernatural powers. By these *powers*, sometimes denominated the *spirit of God*, sometimes the *spirit of Christ*, sometimes the *holy spirit*, they were qualified for the work to which they were appointed, that of converting the world to the christian faith.

In express allusion to the effusion of miraculous powers thus to take place afterward on the day of Pentecost, the Evangelist John had said, (in explanation of a declaration of our Saviour,) that "he spake it of *the spirit*, which they that believe on him should receive;" for, he adds, "the *holy ghost* was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified,"§ i. e. those miraculous powers, which were exercised by the Apostles at the time when he wrote, were not yet in existence, had not yet been bestowed, were not to be bestowed, till after the ascension of their master. So also, when the Christians whom Paul found at Ephesus, in answer to his question, whether they had yet received the *holy ghost*, replied, that they "had not even heard, that there was a holy ghost;" their meaning was, that they had not heard of the existence of those miraculous powers; for it is added, "when Paul laid his hands upon them, the *holy ghost* came upon them, and they *spake with tongues*."

* John xvii. 18. † John xvi. 7. ‡ Acts i. 5. § John vii. 39.

4. Another use of *spirit* and *holy spirit*, too important and of too frequent occurrence to be omitted, is that by which they express the moral influence employed by God *in any way*, for the purpose of producing in men holiness and virtue; or any of the effects of that influence, i. e. the disposition, temper, and habits thus produced. Thus when Stephen says to the Jews,* "Ye do always resist the *holy ghost*, as your fathers did, so do ye;" — he must mean, by the *holy ghost*, all those means, which God employed in present and preceding dispensations to effect the great ends of his moral government. All these they had resisted, and found means to prevent their effects and defeat their design.

In the next preceding chapter also,† when the qualifications for the office of deacons are mentioned, viz. "that they be full of the holy ghost and wisdom;" or, as it is without the article, "a holy spirit and wisdom," there seems good reason for supposing, when we consider the design of the office, that a moral quality, *holiness*, was meant, and not a spiritual gift: As also, when it is said of Stephen, after his election to the office, that he was "full of faith, and a holy spirit;" — And when on another occasion, the same language was applied to Barnabas,§ "He was a good man, full of the holy spirit and of faith." This interpretation however, as to the last cases, is not to be urged with entire confidence; since, with respect to these persons, appointed to the office of deacon, one of them we are afterward expressly told, and another of them, we have reason from the circumstances of the history to believe, were endowed with miraculous powers. The words *may* therefore here, as

* Acts vii. 51. † Acts vi. 3, 5. ‡ Acts xi. 24.

in other cases, have been used to express spiritual gifts, and not a moral quality.

Several other uses of the words *spirit, spirit of God, holy spirit,* &c. having no connexion with the design of this essay, may be passed without notice.

One other use of them, however, by Christians in general, probably believed to be their most common use, requires to be distinctly considered.

For although some one of the meanings already mentioned will furnish, as all must admit, a satisfactory explanation of most of the texts in which either of the terms in question occur, there are some to which in the minds of many neither of them is applicable. Personal characteristics, it is thought, are employed by the sacred writers in such a manner, as is consistent only with the notion of a distinct Agent or Being, of an exalted character, to which they belong, and that the several terms we are considering, are used as the name of that Agent.

The *spirit*, or *holy spirit*, it is alleged, is described as possessing the attributes, and performing the functions of a person. It is described as understanding, willing, acting.* "It knoweth all things, searcheth even the deep things of God, and revealeth them to men." It is represented as "speaking to men," pleading with them, and interceding for them; as bearing testimony to the Saviour, reproving, teaching, bringing to remembrance, and being grieved with men for their perverseness, in neglecting its aids and rejecting its guidance.†

Now in order to satisfy ourselves whether real person-

* 1 Cor. ii. 11.

† John xiv. xv. xvi. Rom. viii. 26. Eph. iv. 30. Acts xxviii. 25.

ality be necessarily implied in the use of such language, or not, it is to our purpose to examine other instances of the application of personal attributes by the sacred writers, where there can be no pretence, that a distinct person is intended. Both the Old and New Testament abound in examples of bold personification. Let us examine a few of them, in order to ascertain how near a resemblance they bear to the one in question.

"This stone," said Joshua to the Israelites, when he had confirmed the covenant with them in the land of Canaan,* "this stone shall be a witness unto us, for *it hath heard* all the words of the Lord, which he spake to us." In this instance, though a personal character could hardly have been more clearly expressed, no mistake is ever made as to the meaning of the passage. No reader ever imagines that *stone* to have been an intelligent agent, as the words so clearly imply, literally listening to the ratification of the covenant, for the purpose of attesting the fact to future ages.

In some of the first chapters of Proverbs,† we have a remarkable instance of the personification of wisdom. Yet though all the attributes of person seem to be applied, not in single epithets only, but in continued discourse, in lively description, in variety of action, we can have no doubt that a figurative and not a real person is intended. We are perfectly satisfied that a mere allegorical person, and not a real being or agent is meant, when she is declared to have "builded her house, furnished her table, mingled her wine, sent forth her maidens to invite her guests; and from the high places, from the gates, the entrance of the city, to utter her voice,

* Joshua xxiv. 26, 27. † Ch. i. ii. iii. iv. viii. ix.

proclaim her warnings, offer her instructions, and pronounce her benedictions on those who will hear, and her reproofs against those who reject, her offers and despise her counsels."

What life and vigor does Paul infuse into his Epistles, by his bold personification of sin and death!* representing them as having power, exercising dominion, reigning over men, and being enemies; yet without ever misleading the judgment of the reader into the apprehension that he is describing real persons.

How beautiful, again, is St Paul's picture of charity drawn in the 13th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians! Yet, though it presents us throughout with the attributes of a *person*, instead of the characteristics of a virtue, no one is led into a mistake; or has a doubt whether or not a real person be meant.

These instances, it seems to me, are sufficiently parallel to those, in which the *personality of the holy spirit* is supposed to be expressed, to furnish a satisfactory explanation of, at least, the most of them; since they shew, that a similar mode of interpretation is required, and is perfectly satisfactory, when applied to the language used by the same writers on other subjects.

But there is one passage, which may be thought to require a more distinct consideration, because more stress is laid on it than on any other single passage, as a proof of the personality of the spirit; and because the personal characteristics in it are supposed to be more difficult to explain on any other ground, but that of a literal personality, than those expressed on

* Rom. v. 14, 17. v 12, 14, 17, 23. 1 Cor. xv. 26, 55, 57.

any other occasion. I refer to our Saviour's discourse to his disciples on the evening before his crucifixion, contained in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John.

In order to console them on that occasion, and prepare them for the loss they were so soon to sustain, he promised to send them "another comforter to abide with them forever." This comforter, he tells them, is the *spirit of truth*, who was to guide them into all truth. It is the holy ghost, whom the Father, said he, "will send in my name; he will teach you all things, and will bring all things to your remembrance. He will not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that will he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He will glorify me, for he will receive of mine, and shew it unto you. Him I will send unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

Now the meaning of these passages is to be ascertained by attending to the three following things: viz.

1. By comparing the language of our Saviour in this discourse with that, which was used by him on other occasions, when evidently speaking of the same thing.

2. By observing how this promise was actually fulfilled, as related in the subsequent history.

3. And then, by placing this in comparison with other acknowledged instances of personification to be found in the sacred writings, so as to see whether the difference be such, that while one is confessed to be a figurative person only, the other cannot be so.

1. In the first place then, the several terms used by our Saviour on this occasion, viz. the *comforter*, the *spirit of*

truth, and the *holy ghost* or *holy spirit*, are manifestly used to mean one and the same thing; and there is nothing to lead us to the supposition, that *holy spirit*, thus used as synonymous to *comforter*, is used in any new or uncommon sense. Besides, when our Saviour said, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever;" can we have any doubt that he meant the same thing, as when he said to them after his resurrection, according to the representation of another evangelist,* "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!" So also, whatever was meant by *the spirit of truth* to guide them into all truth, and *the holy spirit* to teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance; can there be any question whether the same were not also meant, when on another occasion he expressed the guidance and aid they should enjoy, in executing the commission which they were to receive, by saying,† "I will give you a *mouth and wisdom*, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." "It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the *spirit of your Father*, that speaketh unto you." The promise also, which we find in immediate connexion with that of the comforter, as it seems to be but a repetition of the same promise in other words, may be considered as helping us to understand the meaning of the other. "I will not leave you comfortless, *I will come* unto you." In what sense was he to *come to them*, and, as expressed on the other occasion, to *be with them always, even to the end of the world?* Not personally, but by that being, person, power, influence, or whatever it

* Matt. xxviii. 20. † Luke xxi. 15. ‡ Matt. x. 20.

be, which had just been spoken of as the Comforter, the spirit, the spirit of the Father, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of truth, the holy spirit.

2. Let us now, in the second place, look into the subsequent history, and see what account we can find of the manner in which these promises were actually fulfilled. No interpretation of a promise can be more fair or satisfactory than that which is drawn from its fulfilment. It is the interpretation of him who made it, and must be supposed more competent than any other to decide in what sense it was meant to be understood.

A few days after our Saviour's ascension, his disciples were assembled together at Jerusalem by the express injunction of their master, when, alluding to his former promise, he said to them,* "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with *power from on high.*" They tarried at Jerusalem accordingly until the day of Pentecost, when the promise was fulfilled; not as a literal interpretation of the promises, on which they relied, might have led them to expect, by the appearance of a great personage to live among them, to be their leader, and to supply the place of their ascended Lord; nor yet by *his* personal return to them; but by the gift of extraordinary powers, by which they were enabled to perform miracles, to speak in other tongues, were enlightened with a knowledge of the whole scheme of the Gospel, were enabled to preach it with undaunted courage, and to support labors, dangers, and sufferings, in propagating it, with inflexible firmness and resolution.

No other account of the fulfilment of those promises

* Luke xxiv. 49.

is given. No intimation do we find that any other was expected. And we meet with frequent allusion to *this* in the subsequent history and in the Epistles. The persons thus endued with miraculous powers, were said to be *filled with the holy ghost*, to be baptised with the holy ghost, the *spirit* was said to be *poured out upon them*.* And the miracles which they performed in the exercise of these powers are sometimes mentioned as done by *Christ*, sometimes by *God*, sometimes "through the effectual working of the power of God."†

Thus when Peter, by the power thus communicated to him, cured the paralytic man at Lydda,‡ he said, "Eneas, *Jesus Christ* maketh thee whole;" a mode of expression different from what we should have expected, if by the *holy ghost* which fell upon him on the day of Pentecost, was meant not a *power only*, but a *person*, and a person distinct from Jesus Christ.

Whatever was meant§ by the "promise of the holy ghost," fulfilled in what took place on the day of Pentecost, the same was meant|| by the "*holy ghost*," which descended upon Jesus Christ himself at his baptism; and whatever was meant, when it was said¶ that the disciples were filled with the "holy ghost" on the former occasion, the same was meant, when on the latter, it is said,** that Jesus "was full of the holy ghost, when he returned from Jordan," after his baptism. But in this case, the supposition that a person was meant, and not a power or influence, will seem to imply, that the miracles of our Saviour were wrought, not by his *own power*, nor, as he himself asserted†† by "the *Father who dwelt* in him;" but by another person.

* Acts ix. † Eph. iii. 7. ‡ Acts ix. 32. § Acts ii. 33.
|| Luke iii. 22. ¶ Acts ii. 4. ** Luke iv. 1. †† John xiv. 16.

3. If in the third place, we compare the example under consideration with other acknowledged instances of personification in the Scriptures, do we find such a difference as to justify us in the conclusion, that while *those* are understood to refer only to a figurative person, *this* cannot be so understood?

Let the instances which have before been selected, be now brought again before the reader's view. Let him compare the discourse of our Saviour in John, relative to the *comforter, the spirit of truth, the holy ghost,* with Solomon's beautiful portrait of wisdom, and Paul's lively description of charity. Will he find personal attributes any where ascribed to the *holy spirit* in greater variety, or with more distinctness, than in these instances they are applied to *wisdom* and *charity?* Let him recur, also, to the personal epithets applied by Paul to sin and death. Death is, indeed, so constantly in the common language of life, represented in personal characters, that it never fails to present itself to us under that image; and though no one actually believes it to be a real person, the image has so fastened itself upon our minds, that it costs no small effort to correct the impression.

Other personifications less remarkable, will yet serve to illustrate the one in question. I will mention only one more, that of the *word of God.* Now, when we read* that "the worlds were framed by the *word of God;*" that "by the *word of God* the heavens were of old:" we have no doubt that the agency of *God himself* is meant, in the same manner as in the expression,† "*God said,* let there be light and there was light." We perceive only a figurative, but far from unusual mode,

* Heb. xi. 3. 2 Peter iii. 5. † Gen. i. 3.

of saying that *God himself* created the heavens, the worlds, and the light. The same is meant as when it is said of those, who call upon God in their afflictions,* "He sendeth *his word* and healeth them;" and of the ice and frosts of winter,† "He sendeth out *his word* and melteth them."

There is one other view of the subject, which it may not be useless to suggest. It will be admitted by all, whatever their opinion respecting the personality of the spirit, that the terms *spirit*, *spirit of God*, &c. are commonly used in such a manner, as evidently not to mean a person. Now, let the experiment be made upon some other word, for the purpose of ascertaining whether another instance can be found of a term sometimes used as the name of a person, but more commonly employed in a different manner. No such example, it is presumed, can be produced. There are indeed instances, in which *Christ* is used, by a very common metonomy, for the religion, which he taught, and Moses for the law which he promulgated: the names of the prophets also, and of each separate prophet, for the books that bear their names. But this is so rare, compared with the literal use of the name to express the person himself, that no one was ever led to doubt, whether in their common use they did not refer to real persons. It would be impossible, by any ingenuity, to explain them as meaning nothing more than an allegorical personality. It never did, nor could enter into the mind of any reader of the Bible, that Christ or Moses were not real but only allegorical persons.

But in the case in question, on the commonly received opinion, the name of a most important person and power-

* Psl. cvii. 20 † Psl. cxlvii. 18.

ful agent is usually employed to express a mere power or gift, or the influence or agency of *another person.* The presumption therefore is strong, that the opinion itself is without foundation; a presumption, which nothing but positive proof to the contrary can remove; and such proof we do not find.

From the whole view of the subject, we are brought to the following conclusion. That the phrase under consideration is used by the sacred writers in a variety of senses, and what is the true meaning is to be ascertained in each instance by the same rules of interpretation, which are applied in other similar cases. That, whenever it is used as a person, it is the person of the Father; as it is sometimes expressed, *the spirit of the Father;* and that there is not sufficient reason for supposing, that it is ever used to mean a being, agent, or person distinct from God the Father.

1st Series. No. 113.

A

REVIEW OF ATHEISM,

FOR

UNLEARNED CHRISTIANS.

By NOAH WORCESTER, D. D.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.
DECEMBER, 1836.

Price 6 cents.

Tuttle, Weeks & Dennett....Power Press....17 School Street.

A REVIEW OF ATHEISM.

There was a time when it seemed to be a general belief in our country, that it was impossible for a man of much intelligence to be an Atheist, — and it was supposed that those who professed to be Atheists rather expressed the desire of their hearts than their real opinions. But since the French Revolution there has been no want of evidence that men may become Atheists in heart, in opinion, and in practice. At the present time it is perhaps not doubted that there are such characters in our own country, and men too who have an ardent desire to make proselytes to their creed. The occurrence of such circumstances furnishes an opportunity for real Christians to evince the nature and the importance of the religion which they profess. This, however, is not to be done by the indulgence of hatred or ill-will towards the Atheists; but by imitating the kindness of that God who is good unto all, even to the evil and unthankful. If we have the happiness of believing that we have a wise and kind heavenly Father, while the Atheists have not this happiness, let our conduct be such as shall be adapted to lead them to consider what a privilege it must be if there is an Almighty Father possessed of such wisdom and benignity as the gospel

ascribes to God — of such kindness as is required by gospel precepts, and is exemplified by those who obey them.

In this brief review it will not be so much our aim to prove by argument that there is a God, as to show that a belief in this doctrine is far preferable to Atheism; and that of course enlightened philanthropy would restrain even an Atheist from all attempts to change the public creed on this subject.

The change in public opinion which is sought by the proselyting Atheist is great, is radical, we may add, is awful. From being believers that there is a powerful, wise and good God, he would have us become believers *that there is no God.* The creed is indeed short, but it involves much; for it implies a denial of all religious opinions, all religious obligations, and would abolish all religious fears and hopes, sorrows and joys, and place human beings on a level with reptiles and insects, as to moral accountability. There are indeed cases which may justify powerful efforts to effect a change in public opinion. If on any important subject it can be shown that the popular opinion is really injurious in relation to the morals and the happiness of men in the present life, or that it greatly endangers their happiness in a future state, or that it is really reproachful to God; in either of these cases all lawful and prudent means may be used to change public opinion. But if neither the honor of God, nor the good of men in this world or in the future state, is endangered by the present opinion, benevolence and philanthropy would say, *Be quiet*, lest you bring evil on the community. Let it then be seriously observed that the Atheist cannot pretend that the common belief,

that there is a God, has any tendency to dishonor God, or to endanger the welfare of men in a future world; for it is his belief that there is no God to be dishonored, nor any future happiness to be endangered; — and must he not have been a very partial observer if he imagines that the state of society in this world would be improved by a general abandonment of all fear and all love of God, and a general adoption of Atheism as a substitute? It is very true that there have been many unhappy controversies about God and religion, which would be set aside if the whole community should be instantaneously converted to Atheism. But even in this case, it is not to be doubted that other subjects of dispute would arise, nor is it to be supposed that they would be conducted with the more prudence for being freed from all sense of accountability, and all regard to divine approbation. It is, however, to be observed that a sudden and universal change of opinion in favor of Atheism is not to be expected, unless a greater miracle should occur to effect it, than any recorded in the Bible. Unhappy disputes, therefore, in relation to God and religion will not be avoided by the efforts to propagate Atheism. Indeed we cannot imagine any real good to men in this world, which an Atheist can reasonably hope to produce by the propagation of his irreligious creed.

We admit that it is possible to state plausible objections to the belief that there is a God of unlimited goodness, wisdom and power; but there can be no reasonable pretence that the existence of God is contradicted by the light of nature, or the dictates of reason. For while men have differed in opinion as to the number of Gods, the belief that there is at least one God, has been almost

universal in all the countries of the world, and in all ages, as far back as human history extends. Though we have no doubt that the belief in the existence of a God was at first derived from revelation, yet we have strong evidence that the minds of men have been very ready to admit the truth of the doctrine. What infidels have regarded as credulity, or a great proneness in the vulgar to believe wonderful things in regard to superior and invisible beings, may probably be accounted for by that principle in all rational minds by which they are led to infer that whatever was made must have had a maker. This property of mind soon manifests itself in little children; hence their early and frequent inquiries, "Who made this? Who made that? What did he make it for?"

The following propositions we believe to be incontrovertible:—

1. That it is impossible for any man to *know* that there is no God. This doctrine is not taught by the light of nature, nor by the light of revelation; at best it is a conjecture, and a conjecture which contradicts the general belief of mankind in all ages—Pagans, Jews, Christians, and Mahometans—the learned and the unlearned—good men and wicked men.

2. To the humble and upright man it must afford pleasure to believe that there is a God, perfect in goodness, wisdom and power, the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of mankind—who delights in doing good, who loves all who imitate his example, who is ready to pardon the penitent, and to give eternal life to all who obey him. To the same man the doctrine, that there is no God, must be painful and shocking.

3. No rational man can rejoice in the belief that there

is no God, unless he is conscious that he deserves punishment, and chooses to go on in sin rather than return to God as the Father of mercies.

4. It must be a fearful risk, that any man resolves to live and act in the belief that there is no God to whom he is accountable for his conduct. This proposition is made on the ground, that it is at least *possible*, that the Christian's belief, that there is such a God as was proclaimed by Moses and the Messiah is, founded in truth; and if such a God does exist, and has given such evidence of the fact as would satisfy an impartial inquirer, it must be a fearful thing to have lived and acted in rejection of such evidence, and in disobedience to the declared will of our Maker. Hence,

5. The question in dispute should be examined with great care, seriousness, and impartiality. Some questions are to us of little importance, and some propositions which are true, we may disbelieve without blame or danger. There may be neither blame nor danger when unlearned men disbelieve the doctrine, that the earth daily performs a revolution on its own axis. All that they are able to see seems to them to contradict the doctrine; and their disbelief may not result from any bad motives or feelings of the mind, nor have any tendency to weaken their motives to a virtuous course of conduct. We would not say that no persons of our race are blameless, in not believing that there is a wise and good God. There may be some who have been educated in total ignorance of the doctrine; and when first stated to them, they may be wholly incapable of perceiving the evidence of its truth. Indeed we do not suppose that a man is blamable in not believing any truth whatever any farther

than his unbelief is occasioned by evil volitions, passions or dispositions of the heart. But the doctrine, that there is a wise and good God, if true, is certainly a doctrine of vast importance to rational beings. The evidences in favor of its truth are many; and if from aversion to a life of virtue, or love to the paths of vice, or from unwillingness to feel ourselves accountable to an omniscient and righteous God, we have shut our eyes against the evidence of his existence, and rejected the doctrine, our blame and our danger must surely be great.

SOME ADVANTAGES OF THE TWO CREEDS COMPARED.

That we may be in a good situation to judge of the expediency of changing our creed for Atheism, we should consider the benefits or advantages connected with each hypothesis, and compare them together. If Atheism has advantages peculiar to itself, and really preferable to those which are certainly connected with a cordial belief in God and obedience to what the Christian believes are his precepts, there surely will be some reason for changing our creed. But if on examination it shall be found that there are no peculiar advantages to be expected from a denial of the existence of God, it must be folly in us to take this step until it can be proved, to demonstration, that Atheism is not itself a delusion. At present we may at least say, it is *possible* that there is a wise and good God; and if there is, it might surely be offensive to him to see rational beings who have been the subjects of so many favors from his hand, so willing to disbelieve his existence as to do it without even the prospect of real advantage to themselves or to others.

There are certainly some advantages which result from the belief that there is a wise and good God, whether the doctrine be true or not. Observation and experience teach us that it is a great advantage to children to have wise and good parents; and if they are thus favored, it is a great advantage to the children to believe that their parents are wise and good. The favors which children receive are endeared to them by the consideration that they are the fruits of parental kindness, and from good parents. Good children derive real happiness from observing that their parents are beloved and treated as good people by others; and they also find pleasure in doing what they think will be pleasing to good parents, and to their honor. Having the character of good parents in their view, and trying to please and honor them, tends in the most direct manner to render their own characters amiable and virtuous. People who have in this way experienced happiness in their own minds, or observed it in others, may understand, at least in part, the real happiness which good people derive from their belief that they have a heavenly Father, unchangeably wise and good — and who daily live in the belief that he is the Father of lights from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.

We may now appeal to good people of every denomination of Christians and ask, can you not bear witness that a large portion of your happiness in this life results from your belief that there is a wise and good God? Has not this been a great occasion of your happiness both in prosperity and adversity? Have not your daily favors been sweetened and rendered the more pleasant to you from the belief that they came from a heavenly Father's hand? Have you not also been sustained under trials

from the belief that they were under the direction of a God who does not afflict willingly, and who will make even severe afflictions a means of your spiritual improvement, and your future happiness? Have you not felt pleasure in regarding yourselves as dependent on God — in having all your circumstances under his control — in feelings of gratitude for favors received, and in doing what you believed to be agreeable to his will, and to the glory of his name?

Now what has Atheism to propose as a substitute for all this happiness, on condition that we will renounce our belief that there is a wise and good God? Absolutely nothing—unless we can accept as a substitute a little addition to those sensual pleasures which the Atheist enjoys in common with the beasts, and with as little respect to their source as irrational animals. On the supposition that Atheism is the truth, who could be benefitted by embracing it, except those who choose the paths of vice, and fear the consequences? To them it would give a dreadful license for the indulgence of their appetites and passions. But this very license would probably multiply their miseries, diminish the amount of their happiness in this world, and even shorten their days. For such are the common effects of vicious indulgences.

If there is no God, our happiness will of course be supposed to be limited to the time of our residence in this world. Can it then be a work of benevolence in an Atheist to do that which really tends to diminish the happiness of good people in the present state? If they are under a delusion in believing that there is a God and a future state of happiness for the obedient, it is to them a happy delusion. For the belief adds greatly both to

their happiness and their usefulness during life, and they never will wake after death, to experience the pain of disappointment. All the happiness, therefore, which shall have resulted from their belief in God, and their hope of a future life will be so much clear gain. If we could admit even a possibility that our belief is a mistake, we should pray that we might never be undeceived.

Must not a man be fearfully sunk in mental degredation if he can take pleasure in the belief that there is no God? Must he not be greatly wanting in benevolence if he can wish to deprive Christians of the foundation of their present hope and joy, and the greater half of their happiness in this life without furnishing them even with the hope of any remuneration? Should a good man by any means be led to doubt the existence of a God, would not a due regard to the happiness of others dispose him to conceal his unhappy condition, except he should mention it to some intelligent friend in the hope of aid and relief? Suppose a good man to have lived many years in the cordial belief that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; with what horror must he regard the hypothesis that there is no God! To us the horror would be inexpressible.

From what we know of the influence of good example, and what history informs us of the influence of ascribing a military or a vicious character to a Pagan Deity, we may be very sure that it must have a favorable effect for a man to live in the cordial belief that he has a kind and wise God to provide for his wants, and to be a constant observer of his conduct.

We may further compare the two hypotheses by supposing two countries — one of which is wholly settled

with Atheists, the other with Christians, and each of the two classes of people acting consistently with its creed. The Atheists discard all regard to God, his laws and all thought of accountability, or any future life. The Christians regard the Messiah as the image of the invisible God, and as one sent to be their Saviour and their guide to future happiness. The precepts of Jesus they obey as God's laws, and make it their care to imitate the example of Christ — to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, and in love one to another. In which of the two countries would there be the greater share of real happiness? In which the greater security for life, liberty and property? Would not even an Atheist feel safer among the Christians than among those of his own sect? On the supposition that the Christians are under a mistake in their belief of a God, and their hope of a future life, what possible advantage would they gain by abandoning their creed and becoming Atheists? Let conscience and common sense answer the question; and then say whether the Atheist is acting the part of a philanthropist in wishing to unsettle the faith of Christians.

If a practical illustration of the genuine tendency of Atheism, in regard to the happiness of a community, is desired, it may be found in the History of the French Revolution. We know not another case in which the management of the affairs of a nation was so completely in the hands of avowed Atheists. The legislators of that country, in the most open and boastful manner, by public acts, discarded all belief in the existence of a supreme Being — all regard to his supposed laws, and all ideas of moral accountability to any being or power superior to themselves. What then were the effects of this Atheistic

belief, and this boasted freedom of divine laws? This would be best answered by recourse to the history of those times, in which parties rose among these Atheists one after another in rapid, frightful, and desolating succession,—and one party sweeping off another with as little pity or remorse as though the lives of men were as little to be regarded as the lives of insects. Under the pretext of fighting for freedom, they filled the country with tyranny, havoc and wo. What better than this is to be expected as the genuine fruits of Atheism, exalted to power, and governing the affairs of men?

May we not then say that Atheism—whether true or false—is a worthless, and even a pernicious doctrine; unworthy to be propagated by any man who has pretentions to intelligence and philanthropy. We will look at Atheism as proposed for the consolation of a suffering Christian on a sick bed. The poor man is languishing with a consumption and expects soon to exchange worlds. He possesses a consoling faith in God, as wise and good, is entirely submissivet ot he divine will, believing that all his trials are ordered in wisdom and love, and in reference to his final happiness. He believes that in a few days he shall be absent from the body and present with the Lord, to enjoy the promised blessings of eternal life. The Atheist approaches to assure him that there is no God, and no future state,—and to console him with the thought that death will close his sorrows, pains and joys! What robbery could be more cruel than the attempt to take from the suffering man his hope in God and his promises? Had the Atheistic comforter believed that the sufferer was indulging opinions and hopes that endangered his future happiness, there might have been

some excuse. But this is not the case; while he would take from him his present happiness, he believes that death will close his existence,—and that no belief, however erroneous, can be the least injury to him as to future happiness. The same remarks will apply to the conduct of the Atheist in all his attempts to unsettle the faith of Christians, whether in sickness or in health. For he has not even the shadow of a substitute for all the happiness which results to the Christian from his faith and hope in the mercy of God.

The advantages resulting from the different creeds seem very well to correspond with the different hypotheses. On the one hand a *real God* is believed to exist; and real advantages results from the belief. On the other hand it is believed, that there is *no God;* and from this belief *no real advantages result.*

OBJECTIONS TO BE ENCOUNTERED BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE THERE IS A GOD.

To almost any proposition, true or false, plausible objections may be stated. The Atheist has a creed as well as the Christian, and against each creed many queries may be urged by way of objection. It is therefore deserving of very serious inquiry and consideration — against which of the creeds are the objections of the greater weight, or which hypothesis has the greater amount of evidence in its favor? We are not disposed to deny that the Atheist may ask questions by way of objection to the doctrine that there is a God, perfect in goodness, wisdom and power, to which the Christian may be unable to give answers in all respects satisfactory to his own mind. But if this amounts to proof, that

no such God exists, the doctrine that there is no God may easily be proved to be false by a similar process.

Against the hypothesis that there is such a God as the scriptures reveal, the Atheist may urge such queries as the following :—

How has it happened that there are so many tribes of carniverous animals that live by devouring one another, or by destroying other animals more harmless than themselves? Why such relentless havoc among the creatures of an all perfect God? Had there been a wise and merciful Creator, is it not certain that there would have been different arrangements in his animal kingdom?

Again, the Atheist may ask — If there is a wise and good God, why has he not adopted some way to make himself so fully known to his rational creatures, as to preclude all doubt in regard to his existence? If he has done this in regard to some individuals, why has he not shown equal favor to all? Had there been such a God as was proclaimed by Moses and by the Messiah, he surely could have made his existence unquestionable, and if it is a matter of so much importance that men should believe there is a God, as Christians imagine, why has their God done so little to satisfy the inquiring minds of men? And why has so great a part of the human race lived and died under all the disadvantages of paganism?

Questions like these have often occurred to the minds of Christians, and caused some perplexity; because they had not such a view of the whole ground as to obtain answers in all respects satisfactory to themselves, or to objectors. We are free to confess that these queries would be in our minds strong objections to the doctrine, that there is an all perfect God, were there no counter-

balancing evidence in favor of the doctrine, or if we deemed ourselves competent to decide in the cases referred to as to what is right and best in a plan formed by an infinite mind — a plan unlimited in extent and duration.

But how often have we formed an incorrect opinion on hearing but a part of a story, or a part of the evidence relating to a particular case? We have perhaps been told of something which has been said or done that has struck our minds as abominable. We may have replied, no good person could have said or done so. Our informer then says, the facts were as I have stated, and one of your best friends was the person whose conduct you have censured. Of this we may have doubted at first; but on making thorough inquiry we found that all which our informant had said was true; but he had omitted some facts of the case, which, when understood gave an entirely different complexion to the whole affair. We found that what had been ascribed to our good friend had been said or done by him under circumstances which rendered his conduct not only proper but highly laudable. How very possible then it is that we have had a view of but a small part of the facts connected with the cases referred to in the foregoing queries relating to the conduct of God? and that when we shall see the whole, his conduct will appear perfectly wise and good?

How often are little children perplexed by the conduct of wise and good parents, because they are not capable of comprehending the reasons why their parents have done this or that? Now the most intelligent of men, while in this world, are as little children, in respect to a capacity for judging of the equity or wisdom of the works of creation and providence.

We may again observe — How frequently have jurymen and spectators formed an opinion against an accused person while hearing the testimony of the witnesses, and the statements of the attorney employed against him; yet on hearing the testimony and arguments on the other side, have seen cause to change their opinion entirely, — and not only to acquit the man but applaud the conduct, on the ground of which he had been accused. May we not then wisely forbear to censure our Maker, or to deny his existence, until we shall be better informed as to the reasons in favor of the arrangements which now perplex us?

Besides, what man of much observation and reflection has not experienced or witnessed facts like these: while a man is pursuing what he deems a very important object, something occurs which he at first regards as very unfortunate, and adapted to defeat his purpose entirely; yet he afterwards finds that what he supposed to be so disastrous is overruled for his benefit — made highly conducive to his purpose, and is even found essential to its attainment.

In view of such facts and common occurrences, is it not reasonable that men should be cautious in forming their opinions on the propriety or justice of what occurs in the course of providence, the wisdom or equity of which is to them inexplicable, lest they should be found false witnesses against God? On the hypothesis, that there is a God, such as the scriptures proclaim, it is perfectly reasonable to expect that many things in his providence will be to us perplexing, which hereafter may be seen by us to be the fruits of perfect wisdom and goodness. As we certainly gain nothing by judging rashly,

would it not be more wise to wait patiently for better information? He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him, — and often shows the unreasonableness of his censures. God may yet plead his own cause to the conviction and confusion of all who have denied his existence, or despised his instructions.

These several facts and circumstances have been mentioned as suggesting some reasons why we do not think it would be becoming in us to deny or question the existence of a God, merely on the ground that we observe some things which are to us inexplicable, and at first view seem not easily to be reconciled to perfect wisdom, power and goodness in the moral Governor of the universe. We do not even pretend that we are capable of answering such queries as have been proposed. But we wish to have it understood, that in our opinion "God is greater than man," and that notwithstanding there really are some things perplexing in the works of his providence, yet in our view the proofs in favor of his existence, his wisdom, and his goodness, are abundant and ample. We may go further and say, that if there were nothing in the works of creation and providence which are to us incomprehensible and perplexing, we should regard this as more conclusive evidence against the existence of a God of infinite wisdom, power and goodness, than any of the perplexing circumstances which we have yet observed in the arrangements of providence. In view of the innumerable instances in which design, wisdom and goodness are all manifest in the works of creation and providence, it seems to us that a moderate share of self-knowledge and humility would induce an intelligent man

to ascribe the perplexities which occur to his mind to his own ignorance or want of perfect information, rather than to the non-existence of God, or to his want of wisdom and goodness. And among the many reasons why God has given us no more account of his matters, in the cases that appear to us dark, this may be one, that men may have the better opportunity to act out their own characters, — and that it may be seen whether they are so proud and self-sufficient, as to venture to question the wisdom, the goodness, or the existence of him by whose power and kindness they are constantly sustained; or whether they have such reverence and humility as to be still and know that he is God.

SEVERAL ARGUMENTS AND OBJECTIONS AGAINST ATHEISM.

That there are plausible things which may be said against the hypothesis that there is a wise and good God we have frankly admitted; and some of the most plausible and forcible we have exhibited. We shall now exhibit some things which appear to us of great force against Atheism.

We cannot view a house, a ship, a clock, nor even a well made pen, without inferring a designing agent as the cause. Reason not only infers a cause in all such cases, but a cause adequate to the effect produced. If a complicated machine evinces uncommon wisdom and ingenuity, such wisdom and ingenuity are immediately ascribed to the contriver or architect. In the works of creation we behold, or may behold, not only evidences of design, but of astonishing wisdom and goodness.

As the rational mind infers a cause for the existence

of whatever is made or begins to be, so it infers a cause for all the changes in the form or situation of any thing which exists. For the production of one particular change, a long train or series of secondary causes may have been in operation—and this for a long time; but there must have been a beginning to this series of secondary causes, and they must all have been dependant on a first cause which had no beginning. Such is the voice of reason.

While the Athiest denies the existence of a God, what rational account can be given of the formation of the numberless species of vegetables that his eyes behold, which obviously had a beginning, and which evince abundant evidence of design, and of wisdom, infinitely surpassing that of the most intelligent of men? How can he account for the innumerable tribes of animals, on the earth, in the waters, and in the air?—for the similarity of the individuals of the same species, the endless diversities in the different species, the obvious marks of design in the construction of each—the provision made for the sustenance of all, and the adaptedness of each to find and appropriate the food provided for him? All these things seem to us as clearly to indicate an intelligent maker as any machine of human invention—a maker too, possessing wisdom and power surpassing all that is known or even clearly conceived by any human being.

Animals of every species are mortal; not only liable to be destroyed but exposed to natural decay and death by age. It was so with the first of each race of animals; and the design and the wisdom of their maker were wonderfully displayed in the provision which was made for the continuance of each species, by generation and

reproduction. This necessary provision in the formation of animals can with no propriety be ascribed to accident, nor to any cause less wise and intelligent than the God which the scriptures proclaim as the Maker of all things.

If we look at a human body, and observe how each portion is adapted to some important use, may we not well exclaim, we are fearfully and wonderfully made! When we regard our frame as a whole, and observe how its various parts are adapted to motion, activity, usefulness and comfort, how obviously and how greatly does it surpass every human invention, as to indicating wisdom and design in its Author! How perfectly inadequate is all the skill of man to the work of forming a *finger nail* or a *hair of the head.* What then shall we say of his competency to form a hand or an eye?

But if the body of a man evinces so much in favor of a wise and intelligent cause, that no rational account can be given of its existence, but on the hypothesis of an eternal God, what shall we say of the rational *mind* of man? To what other cause can this be assigned? No opinion or belief ever astonished us more than that which implies that the mind of man was the effect of unintelligent nature or matter. What is there in matter of which mind could be formed, or which should enable it, as a cause, to produce such an effect? Nothing surely of which we can form any conception. The very effect produced, of which we are speaking, remonstrates perpetually against such an origin.

What shall we say of the origin of that universal propensity of the rational mind already mentioned, which so early, so uniformly manifests itself in little children, and

excites them to inquire for the maker or doer of whatever is made or done? Can this property be an effect of an unintelligent or atheistical cause?

Conscience is another property of the human mind, which is universal in all ages and all countries — a property which tells every man of sane mind, that it is his duty to do what he believes to be right, and to forbear doing what he believes to be wrong. Though people of different countries are in many things differently taught, as to what is right and what is wrong, — and though the same man may by being more enlightened think differently at one period of his life from what he did at another; yet in one respect conscience is ever the same. It binds every man to act according to his present light; never to do what he believes to be wrong, but always what he believes to be right. That man is not the author of his own conscience, — nor will it go and come at his bidding. Often would the transgressor be glad to leave his conscience behind him, or command it to be silent, when he is about to practice iniquity. But this he cannot do. Conscience will accompany us where ever we go, and be where we are; and, as a faithful monitor, it will warn us if we think of doing wrong. It will chastise us if we disobey, and approve if we are obedient. Now who or what could have been the cause or author of this monitor in every man's bosom? Who but a being that loves righteousness and hates iniquity? Who but a real friend of man? Who but a being that has himself a mind? Who but the great eternal God?

We know that conscience needs education, and may be greatly improved and enlightened by good instructions; but the property or principle is not the effect of

education. It is formed in all countries, and in all sane minds. It early appears in children. To this the parent may appeal to advantage and with great effect, to restrain from vice, and to excite to virtuous acts; — in a word, to "train up a child in the way he should go." It is by conscience perhaps more than any other property that men are distinguished from brutes. Without this, man would not be a moral being; and by this he has evidence that he is accountable; — accountable to what? to unthinking nature, unintelligent matter, or to a wise, righteous and eternal God? Let conscience answer the question.

As the Atheist denies the existence of such a God, does it not behove him as a rational being to try in some way, on his own principles, to account for the existence of conscience in the mind of man? Let him show if he can the probability, or even the possibility, that unthinking, undesigning Nature or matter should evince such regard to moral right, and such abhorrence of unrighteousness, as to establish in every human breast this moral dictator and monitor, which has so many of the characteristics of a vicegerent of a holy and benevolent God.

The mutual adaptations of the world to its inhabitants, and of the inhabitants to the world, deserve attention. If we should, after travelling through an extensive forest, come to an opening where the trees had been felled and cleared off on several acres of ground, and should find a house well furnished for the accommodation of a small family, what would be our inference? Should we have any suspicion that either of the four elements had produced these effects without any thought or design? Or

should we suspect these effects had resulted from some unmeaning combination, or discordant operations of the four elements, earth and air, fire and water? We might indeed imagine that a hurricane felled the trees, and that the fire consumed them. But whence all this evidence of intelligence and design in the whole affair? We should doubtless imagine that some intelligent agent had been at work here — perhaps a kind father preparing a dwelling for a son about to be married. If in the course of a few years we should happen to be at the same place again and find the house inhabited by a young family of human beings, and observe how clearly the situation is adapted to the wants of the inhabitants, and the inhabitants to their situation, our former conjecture would be confirmed.

It must, we think, be admitted that somehow or other there has happened to be a wonderful adaptation in this world to the wants of its inhabitants, and that the inhabitants are wonderfully adapted to the world in which they have been destined to dwell. The more this subject is examined, and the more men advance in the arts and sciences, the more evidence we behold of this mutual adaptation. The world seems to have been formed and furnished for the benefit of every species of animals found in it — for their sustenance and their happiness; but in a special manner for the benefit of our race, they being the lords of this lower creation. Men are formed for activity, enterprize and usefulness; and the objects by which they are surrounded, furnish ample materials for the exercise of their bodies and their minds, and for perpetual improvements in useful and entertaining knowledge. How admirably is the world constructed for the

accommodation of such beings as dwell in it — how far surpassing all the wisdom of the most intelligent of mankind! What less than the wisdom and goodness of such a God as Christians acknowledge can rationally account for these innumerable accommodations, and these adaptations to our wants and our happiness? The best accommodations ever made by an earthly parent for his his children, have evinced but a shadow of that wisdom and parental kindness, with which this world was formed for the accommodation of its innumerable and various inhabitants.

It may be admitted that there are some things in the works of Providence which are to us "hard to be understood," on the hypothesis of an all perfect God. But shall we on this account forget how short-sighted we are, and overlook the innumerable evidences not only of design but of unparalleled wisdom and goodness in the works of creation and Providence? Shall we, notwithstanding all this evidence, not only question the rectitude of some of the divine operations, but even deny the existence of our Maker?

What man of common sense cannot see design, wisdom and goodness in the rich and inexhaustible supply of those two essentials of animal life — air and water? Shall we be so unphilosophical, as well as ungrateful, as to ascribe these and all other provisions made for our subsistence and comfort, to some unknown and unintelligent cause? Nothing is more essential to our subsistence and our comfort than air and water; and there is nothing of which there is a more abundant supply. Shall we then overlook these benefits, or set them down as nothing, because they are so common and so abundant?

If a man happens to be in such a situation as really to suffer a few hours for the want of good air or good water, and is then supplied in an unexpected manner, how readily does he acknowledge the favor to be great. Yet how many enjoy these blessings in rich abundance for months and even years, without ever thinking of them as great favors, or acknowledging the God by whom they were so liberally provided. Indeed we fear that there are multitudes who, although they profess to believe there is a God, act an atheistical part in this respect. But inconsistency in professed Christians should never be urged as proof that there is not a wise, a good, and long suffering God.

The field of argument and objection against Atheism is unbounded. For to no portion of the works of creation can we look which does not evince an intelligent and designing cause. About fifty years ago we had opportunity for a conversation with a man who was strongly inclined to Atheism, if not then fully confirmed in its belief. Though he was a man of immoral character, he was possessed of good powers of mind, great fluency of speech, self-confidence and self-sufficiency, — and was very fond of proclaiming his creed, and of disputation. In the course of conversation we reminded him of the order and harmony in the revolutions of the planets, and observed, that as they were not thinking beings, it cannot be supposed that they are capable of governing their own motions and revolutions. As he doubted the existence of an intelligent God, we wished to know how he accounted for the manifest order and harmony in the revolutions of the planetary system. After a little reflection he replied — "I have been at a loss whether all

matter does not think." On the whole it was obvious to us that he preferred the belief that the planets are themselves intelligent agents, or thinking beings, to the belief that there is a good, wise, and Almighty God. His method of evading the argument, and accounting for the orderly revolutions of the planets, has seemed to us as rational and as satisfactory as to ascribe the same effects to Nature, without any definite meaning to the word, and excluding the idea of an intelligent and designing agent. How shall we account for the fact that there are intelligent men so hostile to the idea of a wise and good God, that rather than admit it, they will resort to manifest absurdities? What is there in the idea of a wise and good God, as the Father of us all, which can be offensive to the mind of a good man?

Atheism seems to us not adapted to any good purpose whatever. It may indeed, for a time, console the minds of some who are unhappy in the belief that there is a wise and good God, one who loves righteousness and abhors iniquity. But it may be doubtful whether the relief which Atheism affords them is on the whole for their benefit even in this life. If it should be a means of their taking a wider range in licentious pleasures, the effects of vice may soon dry up their pleasures, and render life itself a burden. It ought, however, to be a subject of serious inquiry, why are men unhappy in the belief that there is a wise and good God? It would seem that he is such a God as a rational mind would desire should be on the throne of the universe; and it is awful to think of having no God. Indeed we can see no reason why any men are unhappy in the belief that there is a God, unless it is because their consciences tell them

that they do not live according to their belief, that they do not treat the good God as he should be treated, — and that hence they are liable to punishment, except they repent. But let it be duly considered whether the fact that they have such a faithful conscience is not a proof that there is a God, who is disposed to reward the obedient and punish the impenitent transgressor. We believe it is even so, — or that Nature possesses a moral character, and bears a greater resemblance to the God acknowledged by Christians than the Atheists have yet imagined. For something certainly exists, by whatever name it may be called — Nature or Nature's God, that has taken care that rational beings shall have a monitor in their own bosoms to warn them of the danger of doing what they know to be wrong or unjust, and to excite them to do what they believe to be just and right.

Whether the Atheist gets wholly rid of conscience by denying that there is a God, we cannot say positively; for we have had no experience on the subject. But we seriously doubt whether his beloved Nature is so favorable to his wishes as to gratify him in this particular; and if conscience still retains her residence in his breast, it is possible that in an unexpected hour she may assume the office of an avenger, and cause him to be as unhappy as he formerly was in the belief that there is a God. On the other hand, if it be true that by denying his God, the Atheist annihilates his conscience, he must surely be a dangerous member of society; — dangerous too in proportion to his capacity for doing mischief, by sacrificing the rights and the happiness of others to his own selfish purposes.

THE HYPOTHESIS THAT MEN HAVE ALWAYS EXISTED.

That men have always existed, one generation succeeding another, as they have in modern times, is, we believe, the only hypothesis for avoiding the absurdity of supposing that matter produced the mind of man, or that man came into existence with a rational mind without any intelligent cause. To this atheistical hypothesis serious objections may be stated, among which are the following :—

1. It is found by history and observation that the race of men multiply by generation, and that the number of men increase from one generation to another. For an example, the Israelites and Ishmaelites — the Jews and Arabs, are the descendants of one man, their father Abraham, of whom they so loudly boast. At the present day these descendants probably amount to millions, notwithstanding the long continued hatreds and persecutions which that people have endured. In a manner somewhat analogous to this, all the other people of the earth have descended from other individuals, who were cotemporaries with Abraham. How very small then must have been the number of our race in the days of that patriarch compared with the present population of the world! If we admit the atheistic supposition, that the account of the flood is a fable, — and also admit that the ratio of increase prior to the time of Abraham was similar to what it has been since his day, what will be the result? It will be this, that the period from the time when there was but one man on the earth to the time of Abraham, was shorter than the period from Abraham to the present hour. But whatever ratio of increase we

adopt from Adam to Abraham — or decrease from Abraham back to the earliest of the human race, by reasoning from analogy we shall arrive at a period when the race commenced, or when there was not more than one pair of human beings on the earth. Whence did they originate? If there was no God, by what operations, agitations, or combinations of the elements, could human beings with intelligent minds be produced.

Let the following hypothesis be admitted, that the scripture account of the destruction of mankind by the flood is correct; that it was about 430 years from the flood to the calling of Abraham; that in that period the human race doubled its numbers at the rate of five times in a century, — and of course at the calling of Abraham the population of the world was a little more than twentyfive millions. Have we any evidence that the number was greater at that period? If not, what evidence have we that it was so long from the first man to Abraham as has generally been supposed? Will not those who discard the account of the flood find it difficult to produce any satisfactory evidence to prove that men had existed on the earth so much as a thousand years prior to Abraham? That mankind multiplied more rapidly in the early ages of the world than they have done in later ages, is not improbable; but the more rapid the increase the less was the time which was requisite to produce the amount of population which existed in the days of Abraham.

2. We find that as men have multiplied by generation they have extended the bounds of their habitations on the earth. Within the last three centuries, how wonderfully has the continent of America been settled! Even within fifty years how much of forest lands has been

transformed into cultivated farms, and furnished with human habitations. We might easily trace back to a time when the settlement of Europe was as recent as the settlement of the United States now is. Thus has one quarter of the world after another been settled, as the numbers of men have increased by generation. Suppose then, the atheistic eternity, in which men have always existed, to be in duration only equal to fifty thousand of our years, how shall we account for the fact that the world was not as full of inhabitants five thousand years ago as it is now? Surely at the rate men have multiplied in the last five thousand years, the fortyfive thousand preceding years must have filled all the known parts of the world with a population far more dense than that of China at the present time.

3. We find that the human race was destined to make considerable advances in useful knowledge. The acquisitions of one generation are handed down to another, and each succeeding generation add something to the one which preceded. Very great advances have been made within a century. It is true that there have been some particular races or tribes of men that seem to have resembled birds and insects, which make no perceptible advances from one generation to another; but if we consider mankind collectively, we shall have reason to believe that considerable advance has been made in each succeeding age and generation. But if men have existed from eternity, or even for fifty thousand years, how has it happened that they are no more advanced in the arts and sciences at the present time? Why was it so late before alphabetical writing, the art of printing, and the use of the magnet were discovered? Why no writ-

ten records or histories of earlier date than the Five Books of Moses?

4. The science of Geology refutes the atheistical theory under consideration. It proves that the human species has not always existed; but that it is a comparatively recent creation. It carries us back a few thousand years, and shows us the time when there was not a man on the earth. It bears its strong testimony to the fact, that our race could not have begun to exist much earlier than the period assigned for the creation of the first man and woman in the Mosaic history.

It being thus evident that the series of generations of men had a beginning, and that there must have been a first man, — if there was no intelligent eternal God we must suppose that the mind of the first man, as well as his body, was produced by some unaccountable operation of the elements, which happened to produce an effect so extraordinary as that of a rational being, whose body and mind gave the clearest indications of having been the work of an intelligent and designing cause. One of the most surprising evidences of design in his Maker was this, that man happened to be formed for the purpose of generation, or the reproduction of living images of himself, — so that the human race has not only been continued for thousands of years, but wonderfully multiplied in every quarter of the world. That such a being and such a reproductive arrangement should have been formed by the operations of unmeaning and unintelligent matter seems to be rather too much for a rational mind to admit.

That we may more deeply feel the importance of admitting an intelligent Being as the author of the first

man, let the following facts be supposed. A scientific Atheist, prior to having heard of a steam engine, in the course of his travels came to a railroad and saw extraordinary preparations for something which he did not understand. But on looking up and down the road he soon discovered a locomotive engine, with a long string of loaded cars following in the rear, and moving at the rate of twenty miles an hour. The engineer happened to stop the machine against where the Atheist stood, and gave him an opportunity to examine the machine and all the apparatus for conveying passengers, in multitudes, in the most expeditious manner. Having surveyed the whole, he thus addressed the engineer,—"To whom, sir, is the world indebted for this admirable contrivance for conveying passengers?" The engineer replied, "The whole are effects produced by our wonder-working Nature; no intelligent being had any hand in the business. A few years ago there was heard for a great distance around, a considerable noise and agitation of the elements. At length I happened to come this way and found to my surprise the railroad, the engine, and all the cars in readiness for use. I made considerable inquiry in all the region round for forty miles, and could not discover that any human being had the least knowledge of the affair until the whole was completed. Besides, sir, there is something relating to the affair which you have not yet observed. This engine was so formed by nature as to reproduce its own likeness by its own operations. It has already produced one engine that will be fit for use by the time that this shall be worn out by hard labor; and from appearances it is supposed that another will be produced within a year."

We may now seriously ask — would it be even possible for the scientific Atheist to credit this account of the engineer? Yet how very far does the railroad, the locomotive engine with all its apparatus fall short of evincing a matter of consumate wisdom and design when compared with a human being, furnished as he is with *animal life*, *animal senses*, a *rational mind*, a *faithful conscience* and *organs of speech*, as well as the property of reproduction! If the Atheist cannot believe the engineer's account of the origin of the locomotive engine and the railroad, let him not he surprised that intelligent Christians are shocked at his account of the origin of the human race, and the provision made for their subsistence and comfort. We verily believe that the engineer's account of the origin of the railroad, with all its apparatus and accommodations, is not a greater insult to the common sense of mankind, than the Atheist's account of the origin of this world and its inhabitants. And what legend or tradition of any savage tribe respecting the origin of their race is more revolting to the reason of mankind than the hypotheses which have been advanced by learned Atheists to account for the existence of men and other animals? The following legend appears to us as rational and credible as any atheistic hypothesis which we have seen.

"Many moons ago there was a great eruption of a volcano. The lava was caused to ascend to a great height, and while it was in the air there came a powerful hurricane, which seized the lava and whirled it round and round till it assumed the various forms of men and other animals, — and there happened to be two of each sort, a male and a female. As the lava cooled the ani-

mals were carefully placed on the ground by the wind, so that no one was injured. Each male knew his mate, and the multitude soon separated into pairs. From the pairs thus formed the men and other animals which now exist had their origin."

THE DEMORALIZING TENDENCY OF ATHEISM.

We frankly admit that there is often a great diversity of character among different persons of the same name or denomination, — and that there have been very bad men among those who have professed to believe that there is a God. We also admit that men of different denominations have been too prone to impute a demoralizing tendency to each other's opinions, — and that some men appear to be far more virtuous, or at least less immoral, than we should have expected from an examination of the tendency of their avowed opinions. Still we believe that on clear and philosophical principles it may be justly said, that Atheism is of a demoralizing tendency. The opinion now expressed is perhaps the general opinion of Christians in every country; it may, however, not be so clearly understood as it should be, why Atheism is of a tendency so pernicious. Some reasons may therefore be assigned why Atheism tends to demoralize its votaries, and the communities to which they belong.

1. Men as rational beings are influenced by motives of various kinds, among which are good to be obtained and enjoyed, and evil to be avoided or endured.

2. Men are by nature possessed of animal propensities, appetites and passions, which are of great importance to their happiness and their usefulness, if kept in due subjection: but these animal properties require re-

straint, and must be governed, or they will lead us astray. They are what, above everything else, exposes us to temptation and sin. Of the truth of these remarks we have much evidence in the results of inquiries relating to the use of intoxicating liquors. It has fully appeared that by what has been called a moderate use of ardent liquors, appetites and habits are formed which lead directly to intemperance,—and that intemperance impairs the health of the body, debilitates the mental faculties, leads on to many other vices, destroys reputation and the peace of families, fills poor houses with paupers, prisons with malefactors, and the grave with victims of vice and untimely death.

3. Powerful motives are requisite to induce people to be careful and faithful in the government of their animal properties. If there were no such motives to self-denial and self-government, there can be no reasonable doubt that the intemperate indulgence of the appetites and passions, with their pernicious and disastrous effects, would be ten times more frequent, abundant, and ruinous, than they have ever yet been in any civilized country.

4. A belief that there is a wise and good God, to whom we are accountable for our conduct, who requires what is right, forbids what is wrong, and will reward every one according to his deeds, involves the most powerful motives for the due government of the animal properties of our nature — motives for abstaining from all vicious courses, and for the practice of every virtue.

5. Whatevever tends to diminish the motives to self-denial, and a virtuous life must of course have a demoralizing tendency. If a man has been induced to abstain

from any crime or any course of vice by a single motive, if you destroy the power of that motive in his mind, he will of course gratify his propensity. If he has been restrained by the combined influence of several distinct motives, each of which has done something towards his preservation, if you destroy one of these motives you endanger his morals in proportion to the degree of influence which that motive had in saving him from vice.

6. Few, it is believed, among intelligent and reflecting men, will deny the correctness of the preceding remarks. Who then can deny that Atheism, above every other creed, has a tendency to diminish in the minds of men the motives to abstain from vice, and to practise virtue? While it teaches explicitly, that there is no God, — what is this short of declaring every religious motive to be a mere fiction? To the extent that this doctrine is believed, all divine laws are treated with utter disregard, and each man becomes his own legislator. All sense of moral accountability is lost; death is regarded as an eternal sleep; and men are left, unrestrained by moral motives, to the free indulgence of their lusts and passions, so far as they shall imagine that this will contribute to their happiness or pleasure in the present world. Thus Atheism, with one presumptuous sweeping stroke, would to a fearful extent, diminish the motives by which men have been influenced to abstain from the most profligate courses of vice, and to pursue the ways of wisdom, virtue, and peace. Unless then the Atheist, in denying that there is a God, will also deny that men are influenced by moral motives, he must, it seems to us, if he will be honest, freely grant that his creed has an awful tendency to diminish the motives to virtue, and to en-

courage licentiousness, immorality and vice. And so far as virtue tends to the happiness of society, and vice is of a contrary tendency, Atheism tends to diminish the happiness of mankind in the same proportion as it diminishes the motives to virtue.

Let us now look at some facts and circumstances which may evince that the course of reasoning adoped is not unfounded. Observation and experience show, that children and adults are greatly restrained from vice when they believe themselves to be in the presence of a man eminent for wisdom and goodness — especially so, if he is regarded by them as one on whom they are greatly dependent, one who is disposed to do good even to the evil and unthankful, one who loves righteousness, hates iniquity, and is disposed to show peculiar favors to those who walk uprightly, — and one too who is very careful to observe how people conduct while he is present. The higher he is in their esteem as a man of great kindness and integrity, the greater will be their care not to offend him by vicious words or actions. How great then must be the influence on the minds of all who habitually regard themselves as in the presence of a great and good God, on whom they are continually dependent for life and all the blessings they enjoy — a God too of wonderful kindness — a careful observer of their conduct, and disposed to render to every man according to his deeds.

Think of the sad consequences which have often resulted to promising children, when by the death or the long absence of faithful parents, they have been exposed to the contaminating influence of vicious company, and pernicious examples. Now Atheism would rob us all of

the superintending care of our heavenly Father — make us all orphans, and expose us to the baleful influence of atheistic examples and principles, without any God to support and comfort us, or to be any restraint on our propensities; this too without any source of consolation as a substitute for the kind Father of whom we have been deprived by atheistic delusions.

Among our race there are people of different classes; some of whom regard God as their Father, and are restrained from vice by their love to him, to his service, and his laws, — while others may properly be called eye servants. These believe that there is a God, but have no real love to his service. They, however, have some fear of his displeasure, by which they are restrained from some vicious courses and from many vicious actions. We have seen how eye servants will conduct in regard to a master or superintendent. When he is present, or is supposed by them to be in a situation to observe their conduct, they will be diligent and attentive to their business, and avoid every appearance of idleness or vicious behaviour; but no sooner do they imagine that he is at such a distance as not to observe them, than a great change occurs in their behaviour. They perhaps soon indulge both an indolent and a vicious disposition. If they should be made to believe that he is dead, and will never again question them in regard to their conduct, how soon would their deportment evince their disposition to idleness, and this to a much greater extent than when they only imagined him to have absented himself for a few hours. This is the kind of freedom and license which Atheism would give to such persons in regard to the government or superintendence of God. It does not

indeed tell them that their God is dead; but it tells them that they have been under a mistake in supposing that they had a God. If they can believe this, they will have all the freedom which their hearts desired to indulge their propensities, appetites and passions.

What man of candor and discernment can need any further evidence that Atheism is of a demoralizing tendency? As surely as children are restrained from idleness and vice by the real or supposed presence of a faithful and wise parent or master; so surely are reflecting men restrained from numerous evils by the supposed presence of a wise and good God, and a belief that to him they are accountable for the deeds done in the body. To the extent that Atheism shall prevail it will remove these moral restraints, and future generations of children will be exposed to grow up under the dominion of the vilest lusts and passions, hateful and hating one another.

ANTICIPATED OBJECTION — CONCESSIONS — AND CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Against what has been said on the tendency of Atheism, it may be objected, that some Atheists have been men of apparently good morals. This objection may have been founded on facts, yet so connected with other facts as to render the objection of no force against the alleged demoralizing tendency of Atheism. The apparent moral Atheists were probably educated in the belief of a God, and under this belief they might form virtuous habits. Habits are not so readily changed as opinions; and when these men became Atheists in opinion, they might still retain their moral habits, wishing to

retain the good opinion of their neighbors. Their early habits and their respect for the good opinion of others may have long preserved them from the open paths of vice and profligacy. The case might have been very different with them from what it is now, had they been educated in the principles and the practice of Atheism, and in an atheistic community.

It is perhaps impossible for the Christian, or the Atheist who was educated in the belief of a God and in a christian community, to conceive of the extent of evil which would naturally occur if all the motives and all the habits which have resulted from a belief that there is a God should at once be obliterated and extirpated from the minds of men throughout a community, so that persons of both sexes and all ages should be left to the unrestrained indulgence of their animal propensities, appetites and passions. No form of heathenism, known to us, is so utterly devoid of motives to abstain from vice, as Atheism. Should Atheism obtain such a prevalence that children shall all be educated in an abhorrence of all religious motives, it may be seen, in the course of a few generations, that men by becoming Atheists and free to do evil, become also the slaves of vice, and bring evil on themselves as well as on one another.

In the present state of society we can have but an imperfect view of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the two creeds. In all the countries of Christendom the believers in a wise and good God and the Atheists, with their respective influences on society, are so intermingled as to prevent a clear discovery of what would be the effects, if the two classes of people were to live in separate communities.

We frankly confess, and we deplore the fact, that many who profess a belief in God, in their works deny him, or live as though there were no God. Had all who profess a faith in God been duly careful to live according to what they acknowledge to be his precepts, the advantages of a belief in God would have been far more striking and abundant.

On the other hand, it is, we believe, unquestionable that Atheists, by having been educated with a belief in God, and by residing among Christians, have been restrained from acting in all respects according to the latitude which is given by an irreligious belief. In many things they have doubtless acted from respect to the feelings of Christians, or from a wish to retain their good opinion, in a manner more apparently virtuous than they otherwise would have done. Nor is it to be denied that Christians, while in the presence of Atheists or Deists, have sometimes conducted improperly, that they might not give offence to irreligious associates.

In judging therefore of the comparative tendencies of the two creeds and the advantages resulting from them, we should take into view not merely what has been, but what would be, if the two classes of people were entirely separated into distinct communities, and the people of each community should live according to their creed. We are not to form our opinion of the laws of a particular state by the conduct of thieves and incendiaries, who live as transgressors of those laws; but we should look at the laws themselves and see what would be the conduct of the people if they should live in obedience to those laws — or we should look at the conduct of those who are truly obedient. Should a whole community of

professed believers in God, live in obedience to the precepts of the gospel — each doing to others as he would that others should do to him, this surely must be a happy people. Then suppose a community of Atheists, all living in total disregard of any God, any future state, and in contempt of all religious institutions, laws and customs, and all ideas of moral accountability, — and in such unrestrained indulgence of their animal propensities and passions, as would naturally result from their irreligious creed. What shall we say of this society? Is it possible for a well informed man to believe that this could be a happy society? And could anything more be needful than an impartial view of these two societies to convince a candid man that a cordial belief in God is of vast importance to the happiness of men in the present world?

We admit that the Atheists have much ground on which they may justly reproach the believers in a wise and good God. Indeed we fear that the inconsistent conduct of many such believers has done much to promote the cause of Atheism, — and perhaps the ranks of Atheism are now partly filled or made up of men who were once themselves inconsistent believers in the existence of a God. Nothing, it is firmly believed, would have so great a tendency to check the progress of Atheism as a thorough reformation and a consistent practice in those who believe that there is a God. Men may assert that there is a God, and advance the most philosophical arguments in proof of the fact; but all this will be of little avail if the same men in their daily practice contradict their creed, by living without God in the world, and in strife one with another.

In the preceding pages we have endeavored to show that

the Atheist could have no laudable motive for making proselytes to his opinion; and that it is inhuman to rob men of their happiness who find it in a belief that there is a God, unless something equivalent is given in exchange. But if it is a truth, as we have also attempted to show, that Atheism tends to the demoralization of society by diminishing the motives for a virtuous life, and for abstaining from the paths of vice, this is surely an additional reason why Atheists should refrain from propagating their views. It behoves them seriously to reflect on the reasons given by Dr Franklin for ceasing his attempts to convert men to Deism. He had been successful in his attempts with two promising young men, who after their conversion to Deism became dissipated and profligate. He resolved, therefore, that he would do no more at the business of making proselytes to Deism. We know not that the Doctor ever professed a full conviction of the truth of Christianity; but there was something philanthropic and noble in his forbearing to go any further in persuading others to become Deists, when he had seen the effects of his deistical ministry in the ruin of two young men. The Doctor had sense enough to know, that he was as liable to be in error as other men, and that it became him, as an honest man and a philanthropist, not to do what he saw endangered the virtue and the happiness of others. We hope that both the Atheists and the Deists of our country, will in this particular look up to Doctor Franklin as an example. He who would act the part of a good citizen should be careful to do nothing to weaken in the minds of men the motives to virtue. On the contrary, he should do what he can to excite others to pursue the path of virtue as

the way to respectability, usefulness, and happiness in the present life. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down and without walls." So he who abandons all the principles and motives to virtue, is exposed to all evil, both natural and moral.

Should the existence of Atheism in our community be the means of exciting the several denominations of Christians to lay aside hostility and contention, and by love to God, to one another, and to all men, evince the genuine tendency and value of their belief, that there is a God, this will be of vast importance. If on the other hand the Atheists should be excited to try to disprove by their own conduct the supposed fact that their creed is of a demoralizing tendency, and do all they can to make it appear that they can be virtuous and abstain from vice without a belief in the existence of God, real advantages may yet result from occurrences which have been deplored as harbingers of evil. Should there be no rivalry between Christians and Atheists but those of fair reasoning and doing good, to show which of the creeds is best founded, or best corresponds with the dictates of reason, and which is the more efficacious in the production of virtue and happiness in the present life — the results may be highly beneficial to the present inhabitants of the country and to future generations. But if Christians should not take warning by the present state of things, and become more careful to live to the honor of their creed and their God, they will encourage Atheists to go on, to propagate and to act out their irreligious principles.

It is our wish that the Atheists may not have the least ground to say that they are hated and persecuted by

1st Series. No. 114.

VIRTUE, NOT HAPPINESS,

THE

END OF MAN'S CREATION.

By JAMES D. GREEN.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

JANUARY, 1837.

Price 3 *cents.*

Tuttle, Dennett & Chisholm ...Power Press....17 School St....Boston.

VIRTUE, NOT HAPPINESS,

THE

END OF MAN'S CREATION.

THE saying is current among us as a maxim, that "man was created to be happy." The maxim, I believe, is not true, in the sense in which it is commonly understood. And, not only, is it not true, but it has served, I think, as a foundation for other errors. Happiness is called, by a celebrated English poet, "our being's *end and aim.*" It may truly be said to be the *aim* of man; it is *the one great object* of human pursuit. But can it be said, in strict propriety and truth, that happiness is our being's *end?* — that man was created *to be happy?* — that this was the great and ultimate object in our creation, to which every other must be regarded as subsidiary? It does not seem to me to be the doctrine either of scripture, or of a sound philosophy.

In one part of scripture, God is represented as saying of man,— "I have created him *for my glory;*" and, in another part, glory and honor and power are ascribed to God, — for, it is said, "Thou, O Lord, hast created all things; and *for thy pleasure they are, and were created.*" What are we to understand by these declarations, that man and all things were created for the glory or the pleasure of God? Not surely for the increase of God's

glory, or God's happiness; for, being infinite in every attribute, and self-sufficient in his nature, his glory and his happiness can receive no addition. It would be impious to suppose that there could be any thing like *deficiency* or *want* to be supplied in God. The meaning then must be, that man was created for the *display* of God's glory. And how is the divine glory displayed in the creation of man? Is it by bestowing upon him happiness? Are the two propositions perfectly identical? In the *happiness* of his creatures, it is the *benevolence* of the Creator which is displayed. But his *glory* is manifested by the exercise and communication of his attributes in reference to intelligent and moral beings, capable of contemplating that exercise, and receiving those communications. It is displayed, not by imparting happiness to beings merely sensitive, but by impressing his own image upon the inanimate clay, breathing into it a living soul, and, by his own inspiration, giving it understanding. His glory is displayed by giving existence to beings, who may become partakers of his own moral attributes, — and not by the diffusion of mere enjoyment, which is entirely negative in regard to character. His intelligent offspring, by imitating his excellence, become partakers of his glory, and thus add to its display. The *glory of God*, as displayed in the moral creation, is synonymous with the *virtue* of his creatures.

According to the representation of scripture, then, the great object, proposed by the Creator, in forming man such a being as he is, was not any thing of a mere negative character, like happiness, but *virtue*, — *moral excellence*, — that only which constitutes a resemblance to the source from which he came.

In perfect accordance with this will be found, I think, the conclusion to which we shall come, from a comparison of the nature of virtue and happiness, and the relation they respectively bear to the moral constitution, and the moral condition, of man.

It appears that happiness cannot be strictly regarded as the *end* — by which I mean the *final object* — of our creation, from the consideration, in the first place, that it is a *bestowment*, and not an *acquisition*. It is not to be obtained by being directly sought; but is bestowed as a reward to effort. It is otherwise with virtue. This is no positive bestowment; but a personal acquisition. No truth can be more self-evident in ethics than this, — that moral character cannot be *bestowed*; — virtue, from its very nature, cannot be *imparted* or *given*; — it is a *personal acquisition*. How, then, can that be regarded as a final object in man's creation, which, from its very nature, can never be a direct acquisition, through personal effort; but is a mere bestowment, as reward, through the good pleasure of the Creator? In other words, was the bestowment on him of the reward the object of man's creation; or, the formation by him of that character of virtue, for which the reward is promised, and is given?

It appears that happiness cannot be regarded strictly as the *end*, or *final object*, of our creation, from the consideration, in the second place, that, in regard to its nature, it is *inferior in dignity*, and, in regard to its character, is *destitute of merit*. In point of rank, the end must be conceived to be more important than the means. The means are instituted for the sake of the end; and derive all the value and importance they possess, solely, from their relation to that end, and their adaptation to its attainment.

If then happiness be the end, or final object, of man's ceration, nothing else can possess an intrinsic value; — everything else must be regarded as subsidiary; — intelligence and virtue also sink in importance, and are made dependent, for their value, upon the circumstance that they contribute to our happiness. This was the doctrine of Epicurus. How unworthy of a rational and moral being is such a conception of virtue! How degrading to man's nobler nature!

There is merit in virtue. It implies a successful exercise of moral power. It implies strength of moral principle. It speaks of active effort, — of personal sacrifice, — of temptation overcome. It is a personal attainment, through continued personal exertion. Contrast with this mere happiness. Is it any merit to possess happiness? Is the individual more worthy of our respect, because he is favored by this positive bestowment? Does he sustain, on this account, a more elevated rank in the scale of being? Not at all. His rank and his merit depend entirely on his moral worth, — on his own attainments in wisdom and virtue. It is virtue in suffering that we reverence the most. It possesses, indeed, an intrinsic worth, which can be neither enhanced nor diminished by adventitious circumstances.

There is, by the appointment of the Creator, and the constitution of our nature, an indissoluble connexion established between virtue and happiness. There is no necessary connexion that we can perceive between them. But it is a connexion that is constant; that cannot be sundered; and that must be referred to that being who hath in all cases established the connexion between cause and effect. It is an ultimate fact in our nature, that the

practice of virtue is attended with satisfaction. But shall we infer from this that satisfaction is the end? — that the practice of virtue is a duty, merely for the sake of the satisfaction? Does this seem to be a philosophy honorable to our moral nature, or worthy in reference to God? Is it not rather the truth, that satisfaction has been graciously affixed to virtue, to operate as a motive, and to crown it as a reward? By seeking happiness as an ultimate end, we seek for the *reward*, and not the *qualification*, to which the reward is given. We prize the reward more highly than the qualification. And, just in proportion as we do this, may we not render ourselves unworthy of its reception?

It appears that happiness cannot be strictly regarded as the *end*, or *ultimate object*, of our creation, from the consideration, in the third place, of the true nature of man. Man is so constituted as to be capable of seeking other objects, as an ultimate end, without reference, at the time, to his own happiness. I have no faith, whatever, in that cold and heartless system of ethics, which teaches that man is, by nature, an entirely selfish being; that, in every desire, — in every pursuit, — in every action, — he seeks solely his personal gratification. This philosophy I regard as false to the best feelings of our nature; and most unfavorable, in its tendency, to the interests of virtue.

Various are the objects, that may be desired and pursued for themselves alone. There is the desire of knowledge; which is natural to man. It is loved by the intelligent soul for its own sake. It possesses utility and value, independent of the satisfaction which its acquisition affords. There is, in the soul, a natural thirst for its attainment. It craves it instinctively; before it has learn-

ed from experience that it will afford satisfaction; and, therefore, before self-love can aim at that satisfaction, as an object for its attainment. The same is true of every desire that is implanted in our nature. It seeks directly and instinctively its appropriate object; and experiences no satisfaction till the object is attained. It is impossible, therefore, that the satisfaction can be aimed at in the first instance. It is only after we have had experience of the pleasure, that we can aim at that pleasure as an ultimate object of pursuit.

These remarks are true, in application, not only, to the desire of knowledge; but, also, to the desire of power;— to the desire of esteem;— to the desire of others' good. And does not the same hold true in regard to the desire of *virtue*? May not this also be loved and sought for its own sake? Do not all admit that virtue possesses an intrinsic value;— that it has inherent worth;— that there is in it a propriety, — a loveliness, — a beauty, — which gain for it every where respect, and render it an object of desire? The mind's moral vision, it is true, may be obscured. The pure instinctive desires of the soul may be perverted from their appropriate objects. But, as man has been endowed with moral capacities, as these are a part of his nature, he naturally reveres and loves virtue; and is capable of seeking it for its own sake, and as an ultimate end.

And yet, one of the most distinguished writers on the theory of morals, whose work has long been a text-book in our highest seminaries of learning, has given us this definition of virtue;— "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." *For the sake of everlast-*

ing happiness! It is then, for the sake of happiness,— for its tendency to procure happiness, — that virtue is desirable,— and that virtue is obligatory. Of itself, then, it is worth nothing. Its value consists in its being subsidiary to happiness. If I have rightly reflected on the subject, this is a false account of virtue; and is derogatory to its highest interests. It is purely selfish in its tendency; and takes the value away from that which is above all price.

In the fourth place, it appears that happiness cannot be strictly regarded as the *end*, or *ultimate object*, of our creation, from the consideration, that such a doctrine is unfavorable to the interests of virtue. Its tendency is decidedly sensual. It gradually leads the mind to confound moral distinctions;— to disregard moral obligations;— and to overlook that connexion which is made inseparable *between* virtue *and* happiness.

In two respects, particularly, I apprehend the common notion of happiness as our being's end,— as the ultimate object of our creation,— has operated detrimentally to the interests of virtue.

It has led men to seek for Heaven, solely as a place or state of happiness; — and to dread Hell, solely as a place or state of misery. Virtue, moral goodness, piety, the worship and service of God, have been of little value in themselves considered;— they have been regarded as important solely from their tendency to conduct to heaven. The performance of virtue, consequently, has too commonly been irksome. It has been too much regarded in the light of a great and solemn duty, which God requires, and therefore must be performed, whether agreeable to ourselves or not, as the appointed con-

dition of obtaining his reward. It is the promised reward, that has been prized and sought; and not the character, for which the reward is given.

The case has been similar in regard to sin and suffering. It is not so much that sin has appeared odious, as that suffering has seemed painful. It is the misery that is connected with sin, that men have been most solicitous to avoid;— and numberless ingenious expedients have been devised to afford an escape from the penalty, and allow at the same time an indulgence in sin. It has always been a great object, in false systems of theology, to provide some easy way to save the soul from future punishment, and make a compromise with vicious propensity.

How unworthy of a being, endowed with a moral nature, is the thought, that suffering is the greatest of all imaginable ills,—the one great evil, from which we should have the strongest desire, and make the utmost effort, to escape! Will the man, who is possessed of true moral sensibilities and moral courage, stand most in fear of suffering? Is pain, of itself, so great an evil, that, of all things else to be conceived, it is the most to be deprecated? Did Jesus think so, when he submitted to the cross? Surely no. The only evil in the moral world, which is deserving of the name, the one great evil, which has been the fruitful source of every other, is *sin;* an evil, which inheres in the soul of the transgressor; and from which there can be, in the nature of things, but a single way of escape. If we can escape this, we can escape every other. But, so long as sin remains, wherever the soul may be that harbors it, and in whatever period of its duration, nothing can afford escape from

the suffering which is inseparably connected with it. Sin, for its own sake, must be abhorred; and virtue, for its own sake, must be prized and sought.

There is another respect, in which I apprehend the prevailing conception of happiness, as the ultimate end of our creation, has operated detrimentally to the interests of virtue. It has led to the conclusion, on the part of many, that happiness, in a future state, will be bestowed universally, without reference to individual character. "Man," it is alleged, "was created to be happy. Happiness is the end of his being. The purpose of the Almighty cannot fail." Is there not an oversight in this? Is not the inseparable connexion overloooked, which God has established in the moral constitution, between virtue and happiness, on the one hand, and sin and misery, on the other? So long as virtue is possessed, and no longer, it will carry its reward with it; — and, if there be a righteous moral government over the world, it must be a delusive hope to attain the reward, without possessing the character with which alone it is indissolubly connected. While human nature remains as it is, just so certain as the good man will retain the approving testimony of his conscience, the sinner, without repentance and amendment, will be haunted by the consciousness and remorse of guilt.

Virtue, then, should be the object of supreme desire; and vice the object of profoundest dread. However strongly this sentiment is expressed, in the well known lines of the poet, I believe it is expressed no more strongly than is warranted by the truth of the case; —

> "What conscience dictates to be done,
> Or warns me not to do,
> *This*, teach me, *more than hell*, to shun,
> *That*, *more than heaven*, pursue."

The last consideration I have to present, in support of the position that *virtue*, not *happiness*, is to be regarded as the *ultimate end* of our creation, is, that it affords the only satisfactory explanation of the trials and discipline of the present life. The existence of so much evil and suffering in the world has always presented one of the greatest difficulties to the inquiring mind, on account of its supposed inconsistency with the benevolence of God. If happiness were the end, or ultimate object, of man's creation, this difficulty, to my mind, would appear insurmountable. Not so, however, when virtue is regarded as the great end. Man's nature is such as to be improved by trial. Suffering is the best discipline of virtue. It is the school, in which the moral principles are trained, and the moral character is matured. It is necessary to perfect the virtues of the character. The traits of the highest moral excellence can be brought out only through the severity of this discipline. If virtue, then, instead of happiness, be our being's end,— if the improvement of the character, — if the discipline of the moral principles, — if the progress of the spiritual man in all goodness and grace, — be the great object of Infinite Wisdom, in creating us what we are, and placing us here, we may be able to understand how the object is attained, and perceive the reciprocal adaptation of our nature and our condition.

But how different is the case, upon the supposition, that happiness, in itself considered, is the end of our creation; — that it is the ultimate object, to which every other must be regarded as subsidiary! For, it may be asked, how is it, that this object is not attained? Is the design of the Almighty Ruler frustrated? Whence

all the trials — the sickness — the afflictions — the misfortunes — the miseries — to which our race is heir? *Happiness*, surely, as happiness, could have been bestowed *directly* and *immediately*, if such had been the will of the Almighty, without the instrumentality of virtue. Where was the need of this vast variety of means and instruments which are in operation in the moral world?— all having a direct tendency to promote man's moral progress, and improve his moral character; but never looking to his *happiness, in itself considered, as an ultimate end.* All happiness, indeed, bestowed on man, without reference to character, would have partaken more of the nature of that negative and inferior enjoyment which belongs to the brutal world, than of that which is suited to moral and intelligent beings, springing from the consciousness of meritorious desert.

Nothing, I believe, is proclaimed more clearly, in nature, in providence, or in the divine word, than that the promotion of virtue, — the moral and religious culture of the immortal soul, — is the great, the supreme object of the infinitely wise and benevolent Creator, in forming man such a being as he is, and placing him in this state of trial and discipline. That the trials of life may contribute to this object, we can readily understand to be the case in many instances, and can conceive to be possible in all; and we are thus enabled to reconcile their appointment with the adorable attributes of the Supreme. But how shall we account for their existence, and how shall we understand that they subserve the purpose, if man's *happiness, in itself considered, be the one great object of his creation?*

The true doctrine, on this whole subject, may be clearly

illustrated by a reference to other parts of our constitution. For what purpose was it that the Creator gave to man the appetites of an animal nature; — the appetites, for example, of hunger and of thirst? Was it that he might enjoy a pleasurable sensation in their indulgence? Or was it for the preservation of human life? For the latter purpose, most certainly; and his great *benevolence* has been displayed in affixing enjoyment to their proper and moderate exercise. The enjoyment they afford us has been graciously *superadded;* it was obviously *independent of the purpose, for which* they were given. Precisely so it is in reference to man's moral nature. The improvement of his moral capacities is attended and followed with happiness, in some degree, here, — and will be, in a still greater, as we believe, hereafter. But the capacities were not given, nor was their improvement enjoined, *for the sake of the happiness;* but the *happiness has been superadded, to incite as a motive, and to crown as a reward.*

To sum up the whole; the truth I would enforce is this;—Man was made for moral progress. The great end of his being is virtue. It is something that cannot be given him. If he possess it at all, it must be his own acquisition. It is the reverse with happiness. This is no personal acquisition; it is a positive bestowment; and, in itself considered, is entirely of a negative character. Man is created a free moral agent; and, in the possession of this moral agency and freedom, he sustains a glorious pre-eminence in this lower creation. He is endowed with a soul of vast powers, and various susceptibilities, and noble aspirations. He is placed here in a state of trial and discipline; and favored with means and aids;—

all tending to promote his moral progress. Every step he takes in the path of improvement brings satisfaction with it. Every accession he gains to his virtue is attended with its own reward.

To seek virtue *for its own sake* is inexpressibly nobler than to seek it *merely as the means of happiness.* But the infinite benevolence of the Universal Father has not only affixed to virtue, as a reward for the exertion in attaining it, the purest happiness here; but has promised to it hereafter a felicity inconceivable and never-ending.

1st Series. No. 115.

WHY SHOULD WE LABOR

TO

EXTEND OUR FAITH?

By S. K. LOTHROP.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

FEBRUARY, 1837.

Price 2 cents.

Tuttle, Dennett & Chisholm....Power Press....17 School St....Boston.

WHY SHOULD WE LABOR

TO

EXTEND OUR FAITH?

It is the purpose of these pages, to illustrate and enforce the duty of aiding, according to the measure of our abilities, in giving a wider extension and a deeper influence to the holy faith we profess. The subject of "*foreign missions*" will not be distinctly discussed; but the general grounds will be presented upon which all missionary exertions must rest.

Domestic missions, — efforts to build up new, to strengthen and encourage feeble societies in our own neighborhood or country, to gladden with the voice of instruction and the words of truth, the waste places within the borders of our own Zion, — are more important, present stronger claims to our sympathy, make more urgent appeals to our aid, because there is a clearer prospect of doing good. Were this prospect clear and hopeful in any foreign mission, were there a probability that it would be in a good measure successful in producing beneficial results, it cannot be doubted it would be our duty to encourage and support it. Upon this question, however, we need not enter. Let us set forth the general duty of aiding, wherever we can and as much as we can, in the diffusion of christian truth and the promotion of christian righteousness.

Why should we labor to extend our faith?

I. Because Christ commands it. The duty rests upon the express authority of scripture. The grand commission of our Saviour, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," extends in spirit to every disciple. It not only authorizes, but commands every one, who has been put in trust with this treasure, to dispense and communicate it to others. As it has no limit in *space* but the *world*, so it has no *limit* in *years* but *time*, and none in *persons* but *disciples*. The apostles did not fulfil, the primitive disciples did not fulfil, this commission. They could not fulfil it. The commission itself is without meaning, and must ever be without completion, unless we consider it addressed in spirit to every believer, and in force in every age. As well might we say, that all the instructions, promises, and hopes, of the gospel, were intended for those only who heard them fresh from the lips of our blessed Master, as say that, this command was intended for the apostles and the apostles alone. It was not so intended. The command is upon us. It enjoins a great and paramount duty. It relates to a glorious and blessed object. It calls upon us to be fellow-workers with God and Jesus Christ in the redemption of man. And, would we obey it, we must embrace every opportunity that circumstances present, we must employ every means that our condition and abilities permit, in disseminating truth, founding and upholding religious institutions, inculcating and promoting practical piety. Poverty must give its mite, wealth its abundance, wisdom its counsels, strength its zeal, weakness its prayers; all must give what they can, and do what they can, to

usher in the day, when the gospel of salvation shall be preached to every creature, the cross become the symbol of the world's faith, and he who died thereon, the object of the world's reverence and the world's obedience.

II. Because, were there no express command, could no direct instruction be gathered from the New Testament, in relation to the subject, the very principles and genius of the Gospel itself, its appeals to the strong and deep-seated sympathies of our nature, its decisive bearing upon the present and future happiness of man; these, of themselves alone, proclaim and establish the duty, to aid in the diffusion of its knowledge and the increase of its power. Do we need arguments and illustrations, to prove this position? Can we be Christians ourselves, if we take not a step, speak not a word, make not an effort, feel not a wish, to make others Christians? I venture to say we cannot. The Kingdom of God cannot have come in that heart, that does not burn with a desire to do something to establish that Kingdom in every other heart within the reach of its influence. A personal experience of the power and peace christianity imparts to the soul, brings with it the earnest wish to enthrone that power and impart that peace, to all souls. Men may possess many things, without being anxious to communicate them to others: they may perceive that these are not necessary to their virtue or essential to their happiness. But they cannot deem religious faith and Christian knowledge thus unimportant. These confer such exalted privileges, offer so secure a protection amid the moral dangers of the world, open in the heart such pure sources of happiness,

and crown life with so glorious a hope, that, while the believer prizes them above all earthly things, he expands with a noble zeal to impart them to others. That love which is the fulfilling of the law, that spirit of benevolence which is the very essence and glory of christianity, then, demand, that the diffusion of truth and the advancement of holiness, should be dear to our hearts — among the first objects of our exertions and our prayers.

What good can we do to a community, like that of making it Christian in its character, habits, and principles? To increase men's temporal advantages and improve their physical and social condition; to diffuse the blessings of commerce and the comforts of civilization; to encourage industry and the arts, so that the waste soil of earth may be redeemed, and the bleak bosom of the desert covered with fruitfulness and beauty: this is an honorable, a useful, a benevolent service. A glory we may well emulate, and must reverence, a meed of fame, the most ambitious might covet, await those, who, with fearless integrity, uphold the great interests of their country; who, with far-sighted judgment, propose and carry out plans to enlarge its resources and develope its energies, and lay broad and deep the foundations of its wealth, prosperity, and power. But what will wealth, prosperity, and power, be to that country, without virtue? "*Righteousness*," and righteousness alone, truly "*exalteth a nation*." The want of it, is not only the "reproach," but the *ruin* of any people. To imbue a community with Christian knowledge, and form it to Christian purity, is better than to pour into its lap the treasures of the broad earth; and if we bear to others any of that love our Master bore to us, if we have any of that zeal to do

good which made him sacrifice his life upon the altar of human happiness, we cannot but wish, and pray, and strive, to have the truth he taught proclaimed from every mountain, sent forth on the wings of every wind, preached in every city, announced in every wilderness and solitary place, till it sanctifies every corrupt heart, till it illumines every benighted judgment, gives fervor to cold affections, spirituality to sordid desires, life and energy to dead faith, and causes every mind to be hallowed by the in-dwelling of Christian purity and peace.

We see then, that without the express command to "preach the Gospel," the very principles and genius of Christianity, make it our duty to be zealous in diffusing its truths, imparting its guidance and its hopes to others. That great principle of love, by which alone we can prove ourselves Christian disciples, demands it. Others may be absorbed in the cares of business, eager in the race of ambition or avarice, watchful of the play of human passions and interests, ready to seize any circumstance that can be made subservient to their own advantage; but the Christian must place the interest of eternity before the interest of time, the progress of virtue before the progress of wealth. To him the planting of a church in the Isles of the ocean, the establishment of a faithful minister in a destitute parish, the gathering of a little band of disciples for instruction and prayer at the foot of the Stony Mountains, the spread and success of religious truth, in any place and in any degree, must be objects of desire, exertion, and delight, beyond all merely temporal interests and earthly grandeur; and if they are not, he is guilty of hypocrisy and deceit whenever he offers to God the prayer, "May thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth."

III. Because the condition of our country and humanity calls for our efforts.

When we turn from christianity, to the world it was promulgated to enlighten and to bless — from the principles and genius of the one, to the condition and wants of the other — we find a necessity for exertion, from which Christians cannot escape. Christianity, though it has accomplished much, has not fulfilled its mission. Its eighteen centuries of duration have been centuries of progress. We see in them, much to gladden and encourageus, much to awaken thankfulness, enkindle hope, and inspire zeal; but not enough to satisfy and fulfil, — not enough to authorize us to fold our hands in idleness, thanking God that the gracious purposes of his mercy have all been accomplished. Christianity has crept from heart to heart, from land to land, from continent to continent. The cross has been planted upon many shores, its faith enthroned in many hearts; — till the visit of the Magi, bringing their gifts to the infant Saviour, has become but a type of the homage and reverence, which the mighty, the learned, and the multitude, have hastened to lay at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet Christendom, even now, is but a speck on the globe; and the territory of the cross, small as it is, embraces more *nominal* than *real* disciples.

What see we, as we look upon our own communities? What see we, as we glance at our own country, and examine into the religious and moral condition of the millions who are scattered throughout its wide and increasing borders? Christianity shedding its benign influences in vigor and beauty upon every dwelling, investing with loveliness every character, crowning with

the grandeur of its destiny every life, breathing its spirit into all our habits, giving a holy and vigorous action to all the principles of our being, and making us all free, peaceful, happy in the consciousness of our near relation, our growing likeness, our filial attachment, to our Infinite Father?

No! we see not this. The prospect that meets our eyes, is not thus all fair. We see ignorance settling in dark clouds over many minds; vice reigning with terrific power over many hearts. We see ambition, covetousness, and sensuality, making many slaves, degrading the faculties, quenching the light, deadening the sensibility, destroying the rectitude, peace and independence of many souls, causing them to agonize under the rebukes of conscience, and to writhe in fetters more terrible than those of iron. We see indifference marshalling a countless host under her banners. Every year swells her train. We see wealth, enterprise, and civilization, extending their borders, unaccompanied by religion as their handmaid and guardian. The forest falls before the axe of the emigrant; the workshop, the store, the tavern, soon mark his little settlement; but the church and the schoolhouse are not built. That, which the Pilgrims of New England made of the first importance, provision for the worship of God, and the instruction of the rising generations in knowledge and virtue, is now often permitted to be the last object of interest and effort. The music of the waterfall has long been drowned in the noise of the mill, and the deep, hoarse roar of the forest lost amid the din of human occupations and enterprise, before the voice of public prayer is heard in the new settlement, or a spire raised to remind its dwellers of the Heaven to which it points.

Little, comparatively very little, of our fathers' spirit, marks those who are marching forward to the invaluable inheritance of this western world. They sought first *freedom* to *worship God*, and made that worship hallow every enterprise. But now, this freedom is often not sought and not cared for; and toil, and sacrifice, and exertion, are made for any enterprise rather, than that which shall procure and provide for it. And where it is not exactly thus, what difficulties are in the way? What multitudes are there in our western borders, burning with a deep interest in divine truth, thirsting for religious instruction, but possessing small means, enjoying few privileges, having to contend with many discouraging obstacles. They are in the lonely wilderness, distant a day's journey it may be from human neighbors and christian dwellings, sighing perhaps for the "word of life," for some messenger Tract to bring them good tidings — over whose pages their eyes can glisten in solitude, from whose instructions their hearts can gain fresh strength for their duties and their trials; or they are associated with a feeble remnant of Israel, in upholding the faith of their fathers, straining to the utmost their narrow means, to provide for themselves and their children the privileges and institutions of Christian worship, seeking with all the earnestness of faith and zeal, some token of sympathy, some expression of interest, some effective aid and encouragement, which could be easily given and would be thankfully received from their wealthier and more fortunate brethren, who hold like precious faith with themselves.

Such is the condition of our country — and have we nothing to do? Is the Gospel put in our trust, that we may hide it in our hearts as a miser hides and hoards his treasure? May we see it despised, neglected, perverted,

and not seek to bring it acceptance, honor, and influence? May we see ignorance, and not strive to enlighten it? sin, and not wish to remove it? a mind in chains, and not aid to free it? a soul sinking to perdition, and not rush to stop it? Shall we hear our brethren crying for the bread of life, see them struggling in feeble and isolated bands to support the preaching of the word, and maintain religious institutions, and say nothing and do nothing to strengthen and encourage their efforts, lighten their burden, and cheer their hearts? But you are no sectarian, you say — have no love and no zeal for proselytism. But have you no love and no zeal for *truth?* Is there no form of christianity dearer to your hearts than any other? Would you as willingly be yourself a Catholic as a Unitarian, a Baptist as a Quaker, or an infidel as either? You would not. Though ready to recognize all as brethren and disciples, there is one form of faith you call your own, one system of christianity in your judgment, more consonant to scripture and to truth than any other, and faith and sincerity demand of you to uphold that form, to diffuse and extend that system, by means that are Christian in their character, and by efforts that know no limit but your abilities. Help others as you can and as you may. That man is to be pitied, who sees no good but in his own denomination, and will encourage no efforts that spring not from the bosom of his own church; but he is to be pitied more, who takes an interest in no denomination, who feels himself allied by kindred faith and sympathy to no body of Christians; and who, shut up in the cold and selfish solitude of his own heart, is willing to let the tide of wild passions, of blind ignorance, of desolating irreligion, wickedness, and folly, sweep onward as it may.

Reader; Be not that man yourself. If you fear *sectarianism* and *bigotry*, fear as much, nay fear more, *apathy* and *negligence*. If you would shun a zeal which is not according to knowledge, shun also a *knowledge which is without zeal*. The last is as unchristian, as great a sin, as great a weakness as the former. Let not your liberality be but another name for indifference. Let not your freedom from the bonds and discipline of a sect degenerate into a disregard of the responsibilities of *truth* and the obligations of duty. You associate with many others in the various enterprises of trade and commerce, that by the union of *small* individual means, a vast and powerful *aggregate capital* may be acquired. You do not feel your individuality to be merged in these associations, nor your liberty to be infringed by them. Fear not then a loss of liberty or individuality by similar associations for moral and religious purposes. *Unite* with your fellow *Christians*, as well as with your fellow *citizens*. Give your individual mite, however small, that the treasury which is to support general and extensive efforts may be kept full. Help as your abilities will permit, to multiply near and afar, amid the distant and poorer population of the west, and in the crowded cities and flourishing villages of the east, the number of our churches and the means of religious instruction, till they meet the wants of our increased and increasing numbers. Be true to your position, faithful to your opportunities: aid by every means in your power in bringing Christianity home to the hearts and consciences of this growing people, until all are imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, until the habits, principles and characters of all are conformed to what that Gospel requires.

1st Series. No. 116.

THE

HISTORY OF CHRIST,

A TESTIMONY

THAT

THE FATHER IS THE ONLY GOD

AND

SOLE OBJECT OF ADORATION.

By W. J. FOX.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

March, 1837.

Price 3 cents.

Tuttle, Dennett & Chisholm....Power Press....17 School St....Boston.

A TESTIMONY

THAT

THE FATHER IS THE ONLY GOD.

Christ bore witness to Unitarian Christianity. I assert this without fear of contradiction. He taught expressly every principle which we hold; and his followers, of all times, in all countries, through all sects, have borne involuntary testimony to the assertion; for not one of those principles have they dared to deny in words, although they have virtually denied them all by additions more or less inconsistent with their truth, destructive of their evidence, and hostile to their spirit. He taught and we hold the Divine Unity as the basis of revealed religion. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." They deny it not, but assert a Trinity, which makes it unimportant and unmeaning. He inculcated, and we practise, the worship of the Father. "When ye pray, say, Our Father." They say so, sometimes at least; but they also go on to say, "O God the Son," "God the Holy Ghost," or "Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity." And so of the rest. We take his instructions; we leave their unauthorized additions. We bear witness *for* the first, because they are God's truth; *against* the last, because they are man's inventions.

That the Father is the only God and object of worship

is the topic to which attention is especially directed in this tract. We adore the Father only; in the religious services of other Christians, the Son and the Holy Ghost are associated with him. For the worship of the Holy Ghost there is confessedly neither precept nor example in Scripture. As to that of the Son, Christ is himself a clear and decisive witness. I have adverted, and shall again, to his language on this subject; but it is not my design to dwell upon particular expressions or detached texts. I appeal to facts; to his whole history as recorded in the New Testament. This is the single argument which I shall urge. Those facts bear unequivocal testimony that the Father is, and that Christ is not, the only God and object of adoration. Let the inquirer take the gospels, and imagine a being conscious that he was the most High God in human shape, and ask whether the emotions and actions of Jesus, there recorded, were those of such a being, or not rather those of a created one, placed in circumstances the most extraordinary, raised up and qualified of heaven to be the Saviour of the world? The answer, on a fair review of the transactions of our Lord's life and ministry, is, to my mind, obvious and final.

1. Christ was born. Now in the narrative there is nothing calculated to impress on the minds of friends, relatives, or neighbors, that the infant was personally one with the Deity; that he was an incarnation of Jehovah. It was not till ages after, that Mary was styled "Mother of God." What an expression! as if she actually carried infinity in her bosom, gave existence to eternity, and held Omnipotence in her arms! Modern Trinitarians shrink from such language, and well they may. Yet what becomes of their faith, unless the birth of Christ was the birth of God, and the mother of Christ the mother of

God? At any rate, they allow that although Christ possessed two natures, he was but one person, and that person the history tells us, was born. Tell any one whose notions of Deity are above those of heathenism, that you bring him an account of a person who was born, and he can have no hesitation in inferring from that single fact, that the person in question was not God.

2. In his youth, Christ "increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man."* Trinitarians say, "as to his human nature." The writer says no such thing; and the fact, unless so modified, is fatal to their hypothesis. If the human nature formed but one person with the divine nature, there could be no accession to his wisdom. From the moment of that union he must have been perfect in knowledge. That the deity gradually filled the humanity, as the latter was able to bear it, (the explanation sometimes advanced of this passage,) is a notion destructive of the doctrine of the proper Deity of Christ; for humanity never could receive unlimited knowledge, nor the finite ever expand to the comprehension of the infinite. Is it said that the writer only speaks of appearances? And how came they to detect, under those illusory appearances, the reality which escaped him and his authorities? Will they argue that the growth in stature, recorded in the same sentence, was mere appearance also? And by what figure of speech could God be said to grow in favor with himself? Is it supposed that, possessing infinite wisdom, the youthful Christ concealed its extent, and regulated its exhibition so as to manifest it gradually, like other children, and seem to enlarge his acquire-

*Luke ii. 52.

ments as they do? Had the writer meant this, he could have been at no loss for words to express his meainng. The supposition itself can scarcely be stated without reprobation, for it imputes to Christ a degree of management almost amounting to duplicity, in order to save the doctrine of his deity from instant confutation.

3. At the baptism of Christ, the Holy Spirit descended upon him, like a dove, and the voice of God proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Such a declaration is the language of a superior. It expresses approbation and invests with authority. By pointing out Jesus as the Son of God, or the Messiah, the Jews were commanded to receive his instructions. The descent of the Spirit was the gift of that which, had the Son been God, would have belonged to him before. He who expresses public and authoritative approval of another, entrusts him with a commission, and confers on him a donation, must be greater than that other. The transaction is demonstrative of the inferiority of the Son to the Father.

4. Christ was then tempted in the wilderness. Whether by the devil personally, on in vision, or by a human tempter, or whether the narrative be only a figurative description of his own reflections at that anxious and important period, I shall not now enquire. Whatever interpretation be adopted, still it was a *temptation.* There having been no witnesses, and the account therefore coming from himself, or by revelation, to the Evangelists, its description by that term is decisive. It was not only so intended, as when men are said to tempt God, but it was so felt, and rebutted by better thoughts and scriptural principles. He was tempted, not like as

God is, but "in all points like as we are;"* not in design or imagination only, but in reality. The record is one of human feelings, struggles, and success. Is it God that is to be threatened with delusion, bribed with glory, moved with hunger, awed by danger, that triumphs in resistance, and is cheered by the ministration of angels? In this sense, God cannot be tempted, but Christ was, and was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Whatever be said of his natures, he was the subject of a trial to which Deity cannot be exposed.

5. He frequently engaged in acts of devotion, and sometimes retired for that purpose, when his object could not be (according to the explanation which has been given of other instances) merely to set an example to his followers. A praying Deity is an inconceivable combination. Why should *he* pray who was conscious of being the Lord of all power and might? And to whom? He had, at most, but equals. So far as his prayers are preserved, they are those of an inferior. Free as he was from sin, they contain not the confessions which we use; but in all else they show the devout workings of the human heart. They comprise acknowledgments of superior power and sole divinity in the person addressed,† praises for the gracious displays of his presence and favor,‡ earnest petitions for protection and deliverance, and pious expressions of filial confidence.§ They shew the ebbs and flows, the risings and subsidings of human emotion; not the tideless ocean of infinity.

He always prayed to the Father; never to the Holy Ghost, never to the Trinity, never to his own supposed

*Hebrews iv. 15. † John x. 21, xvii. 3.
‡ John xi. 41, xvii. 2—26. § John xii. 27, 28; Matt. xxvi. 39.

divine nature, which, if there be any truth in the position that he prayed as man, not as God, he surely might have done, and would have done for the sake of affording instruction and example on a subject where they were most needed. If he received homage, (rendered "worship," but originally so rendered when the English word, like the Greek, included various kinds of regard, religious and civil,) it was not divine homage, for they who proffered it could have no suspicion of his godhead. He was, it is probable, occasionally present with the Apostle Paul, who refers to petitions to him. And when Stephen committed his spirit to him, as the appointed reviver of the dead, he distinguished the act from one of adoration, by afterwards kneeling down in prayer to God for the pardon of his murderers. While he was personally with his disciples, either before or after his resurrection, requests could with propriety be made to him, as a divinely-commissioned Teacher, which when he was taken from them would amount to worship; these, therefore, he solemely prohibited. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."* There is then no scriptural obstruction to the fair inference from his conduct, which is only that we should obey his injunction, and when we pray say, Our Father.

6. The feelings and sympathies ascribed to him are inconsistent with his being God. The very emotions, as felt by him, with their appropriate expressions, are matter of history. He "rejoiced in spirit" at the success of his disciples. He glowed with honest indignation at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He melted into tears at the

* John xvi. 23.

grave of Lazarus. Individuals of peculiar amiability he loved. For the wretched he had sympathy. His soul was "troubled," and "exceeding sorrowful," as calamity thickened around him. The approach of death thrilled his exhausted frame with agony. On the cross he stayed his sinking mind by prayer. What ideas of Deity must they have who believe the individual who was conscious of all this, to have also been conscious that he had created the world, that he was then supporting all things, and that his every word or wish was omnipotent!

7. As a Teacher we find him asserting the sole Deity of the Father, his own reception from God of wisdom and power, and his inability to do anything of himself. Before his greatest miracle, the raising of Lazarus, he solemnly and publicly appeals to Him who heard him always, a phrase which intimates the fact, that on such occasions he always prayed. He taught anything rather than his own deity; and when the Jews made his assumption of the title *Son of God* the occasion of a charge against him, he repelled it, on the Unitarian principle, by shewing that the higher appellation, *God*, was bestowed in Scripture upon human beings on account of the offices which they filled.*

8. As a sufferer he showed himself not to be God. Go with him, Trinitarian, to the garden of Gethsemane; behold him there, appalled for a moment by the horrors of his destiny; appealing to his disciples for the consolation of human sympathy;† reiterating his prayer that the cup might pass from him; sweating as it were great drops of blood; and at length strengthened by an angel,

* John x. 33—36. † Matt. xxvi. 40.

and nerving his mind for the dreadful conflict. See him again, on the cross, his piety for a moment clouded,* but bursting to its wonted brightness as the lamp of life expired. See him entombed. Are these demonstrations of an essential and personal oneness with the Deity? Are they compatible with that doctrine? Does not Trinitarianism require, not merely that sacred history be written in other words, but that its materials should consist of another and very different course of events?

9. We will not stop here. Proceed as far as the New Testament will guide you, and still the impression is the same. Behold him rising from the grave; but how? By the spirit of God, by the power of the Father. So the fact itself intimates, for on the revival of a dead body we naturally look for some external and sufficient cause; and so the sacred writers repeatedly declare. They confirm our inference. Who shall put aside these obvious and authoritatively assigned causes, to substitute their own reverie of his inherent deity?

10. He is honored and exalted; by whom? God gives him a name, power, a seat at his own right hand, and a revelation,† (which therefore he had not before,) communicating that knowledge of the day of judgment which he had previously disclaimed,‡ and, by disclaiming, pledged his veracity to the limited nature of his information, and of course to the negation of his deity. It was the crucified man that was made both Lord and Christ.§ The derivation of all his honors from a superior is a substantive part of the scriptural record of the dignity to which he is advanced. And high as that

* Matt. xxvii. 46.
† Rev. i. 1.
‡ Mark xiii. 32.
§ Acts ii. 36.

dignity may be, when all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under him.* When the loftiest praises are offered, it is to him that died, not to one that could not die; † and in the final consummation of that dispensation of mercy of which he is the constituted head, the Son himself shall be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all.‡

And let the Father be all in all to us, as the sole author of our blessings, and object of our adorations. The witness of Christ's life and ministry to the truth of the sole Deity of the Father, is not more decisive of his claims than of our duties. Our lives also should bear witness to truth, by firmness in its profession, zeal in its diffusion, and conformity with its requirements.

1. Be consistent in its profession. Our religious opinions are no vague speculation, but the plain dictates of reason and of scripture. They rest not on niceties of language, or learned criticisms, but are distinctly proclaimed by the voice of sacred history; and are embodied not only in the words, but in the facts of the New Testament. I see not how the argument from the life of Christ can be rebutted or evaded. It will not avail for the Trinitarian to reply, that, in the particulars adduced, Christ spoke, felt, acted, suffered, or was exalted, *as man*, for if that man were one with God, he could not have so spoken, felt, acted, suffered, or been exalted. The union with omniscience, omnipotence, and supremacy, would have rendered it impossible. His deity is negatived, and consequently the sole deity of the Father established, not by the reading of a text,

* 1 Cor. xv. 27. † Rev. v. 9—12.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

or the version or interpretation of a phrase, but by the spirit of the whole narrative. And as the evidence of this, our distinguishing tenet, that religious homage is due to the Father only, is most ample, so is the principle itself most important. It should seem, generally, I think, that in so momentous a concern as religion, it is the duty of every man, his duty to God and truth, to avow his convictions. At any rate, Christ has decided the question for his followers. Other teachers and religions may allow temporizing in dangerous circumstances; he makes no such allowance in the utmost extremity. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in heaven." The duty of profession can scarcely be more obligatory as to the mission of Jesus than as to the object of worship. The latter subject involves (which the former does not always) the formation of separate religious assemblies. It is at the peril of the reprobation of our consciences, and the anticipated frown of our Judge, that we sanction, by word or deed, the adoration of beings who, to us are no gods.

By thus openly adhering to the worship which he practised and enjoined, we best shew our veneration for Christ. And he *is* the object of our veneration, and of our love. Not indeed on Trinitarian, but on scriptural principles; not for possessing attributes of Deity, or for becoming incarnate, or for making an infinite satisfaction to avenging justice; but for enduring the cross, despising the shame, and bringing life and immortality to light; for proclaiming with his lips, and sealing with his

blood, and confirming by his miracles, and announcing to the world, by his apostles, the gospel of the grace of God, the Universal Father. Ill do we shew our love or veneration towards him, if we rob the Father of the honors of his nature, the glories of his benevolence; or even if we tamely regard the prevalence of errors which have that effect; for truth requires of us, —

2. Zeal for its diffusion. Justly did the Evangelist apply to Christ the language of the Psalmist, "The zeal of thine house hath consumed me." Christianity was originally characterized by its proselyting spirit. The Acts of the Apostles is a continued record of its inextinguishable nature, extensive operations, and wonderful results. In the minds of the apostles the desire of life seemed to be absorbed in the stronger desire of promoting the Christian cause, and the fear of death was overcome by the stronger fear of not serving that cause to the extent of their ability. The common apprehensions which, especially in despotic times and countries, must have been felt in their presence, whose words were law, and whose will was fate, became as nothing; and a manly though modest testimony was borne before the proudest of the powers that were, to the crucified one of Nazareth. The sneers of the learned did not abash, the fury of the multitude did not terrify, the mandate of the powerful could not silence them. Prosperity could not relax, nor adversity chill them into inaction. They sought out the scattered inhabitants of the wilderness; they cried aloud in the streets of the crowded city; they reasoned from the books of Moses in Jewish synagogues, and appealed to the sublimity of nature on the Areopagus of Athens. They wrote, and preached,

and pleaded. They attacked alike the bigotry of the Jews, and the idolatry of the Gentiles. In all stations, from the noblest palace to the gloomiest dungeon; in all countries where travel could bring, or winds and waves could waft them; through all receptions, whether priests prepared the sacrifice to worship them as gods, or executioners bared the knife to sheathe it in their bosoms they pursued the same object, their whole souls, indifferent to all that attracts, contemptuous to all that terrifies, bent on the work of proselyting the world to Christianity.

Was this spirit designed to be peculiar to their times and them? Should no portion of it descend on us, as believers in what we deem the pure gospel, so generally and so grossly corrupted? That Christ made its exercise the duty of his apostles; that they infused it into their disciples; that it became a distinctive mark of the religion; these are all presumptions of its permanence, although undoubtedly different circumstances may render it improper. Whether they do so, in this case, is best ascertained by the enumeration of those circumstances. That Trinitarianism is immeasurably superior to the licentiousness and vice of Gentile idolatry, is gladly granted. Still what is it, as compared with the Gospel? In the confusion of its worship, its gloomy representations of the Divine character, and the repulsive terrors of the doctrines of satisfaction, reprobation, and endless misery, we see enough to rouse our feelings and animate our efforts. That we alike bear the Christian name, and appeal to the Christian Scriptures, is an advantage that should inspire confidence, and not a consummation in which we ought contentedly to rest.

We have not miraculous powers. Let us, then, diligently employ what powers we do possess. We are not exposed to the worst horrors of persecution. Then the timid need not fear; and the bold, meeting with fewer obstacles, may accomplish greater results. We have no divine commission; but we have the words of Christ, which were their commission. Of the difficulties, some may leave the question where it was; but some confirm the duty, and none are fatal to its obligation. Is it said, Truth must prevail? Let us leave its advance to Providence? This might have been said then, and it would have been said in vain. How does truth prevail, how does Providence generally make it triumphant, but by human agency? By the statement of its evidences, the illustration of its loveliness, the exposure of error, the excitement of attention, and all that indicates the spirit of proselytism? How was the reformation achieved? How did Unitarianism revive? If truth in theology is to be left to itself, why not truth in morals, in politics, in philosophy? Why not abstain from reprehending the drunkard or adulterer, because righteousness must prevail? Why not let power unheeded trample upon right, because freedom must prevail? Why not bid the philosopher burn his volumes, stop his researches, dash to atoms the apparatus of his experiments, because science must prevail? Why not let misery perish, and withhold the pittance of relief, because charity must prevail?

3. Conformity with its dictates. Without this, all else is but as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Pre-eminently favorable are our principles to benevolence, and closer than any other do they draw the bonds

of universal brotherhood. Their influence in the production of this, the essence of all social virtue, is great; nor less favorable are they to devotion. To know God is to love him; and as all mistake about a perfect being must necessarily make him appear less amiable than he really is, the removal of such errors, and the dispersion of this confusion, tend immediately and powerfully to elevate devotion. Distraction and depression are the natural results of the notions of a plurality of divine persons, and of the vindictiveness of divine justice. They hide the truth, and, of course, obstruct and weaken, if not destroy, the feelings of pious gratitude which would spring up in its light. Above, heaven bends in benignant loveliness; and below earth smiles in grateful and responsive fruitfulness, like God and the heart of man; but the interposing cloud that veils the glories of the one casts a broader and deeper circle of gloom upon the other. From many that cloud has passed away. Soon may it in all regions, that to Him whose right they are, the prayers, and thanksgivings, and hearts of his children may be restored. We revere him in all the spirituality of his nature, the immensity of his presence, the paternity of his character. The universe is his temple; the dome of heaven its lofty roof; the plain of earth its wide basis; sun, moon and stars its glittering ornaments; every contrite heart an altar, every upright man a priest; and obedience and sincerity the incense that shall ascend to his palace and his throne, and draw down his gracious benediction.

1st Series. No. 117.

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL

WANTS OF THE WEST.

BY WILLIAM G. ELIOT,

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

April, 1837.

Price 3 cents.

Tuttle, Dennett & Chisholm....Power Press....17 School St...,Boston.

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL WANTS

OF

THE WEST.

The subject which in this tract we propose to discuss, is one of the utmost interest. We propose to speak of the religious and moral wants of the West. In doing so, our object is not, at all, to produce an elaborate essay, but simply to call the attention of the religious community in the Eastern States, and especially of Unitarians, to their duty as Christians and Patriots. We would make a plain but earnest appeal to our brethren. By speaking the unexaggerated truth, we would arouse them, as far as we can, to a missionary zeal; so that they may rise as one man, to build the churches of Christ and send out preachers of the truth, until there is no spot in the broad valley of the Mississippi where their influence is not felt.

But, even while stating our purpose, we are compelled to remember that prejudices are to be overcome, and antecedent objections to be set aside, before we can obtain a fair hearing. There are those who have said to us, "You may as well desist at once — you will but speak and argue in vain. Your cause is prejudged, your subject unpopular." "There is no single object," says another, "for which Unitarians will do so little as for a missionary enterprise. Appeal to them in behalf

of sufferers from a fire, or an earthquake, or a famine, and money will be given as freely as water; but they have no sympathy with 'missions,' and will turn a deaf ear to your words, however earnest." These statements may be true, but, for our own part, we respect the Church to which we belong too much to believe them. We will not believe them, until repeated experiment has brought repeated failure; and if conviction is at last forced upon us, we shall have nothing left but to be lost in wonder at the fact. What! Every cause popular, but that of Christian truth! A Christian people, ready to give every kind of charity but that which promotes religion! An enlightened Christian community, willing to diffuse every kind of good influence, except the knowledge of Christ! It would be monstrous. It is incredible.

"Still," it is answered, "your subject is certainly an unpopular one." For what reasons can it be so? Why is it unpopular. "Because, in short, we are tired of church-building. We have contributed to so many by which little good has been done, that we are determined to contribute no more." Upon the same principle, we have heard some persons refuse to give alms, because they have discovered that their bounty has been several times misplaced. A wrong conclusion, into which the Christian should beware of falling. It is better to give often and freely, although often to no purpose, than not to give at all. We may indeed be cautious and take pains to know that a cause is good, before we give our help: but when we see that it is good, we shall prove our wisdom by promoting it, not by holding back because our generosity has been, in some previous case,

abused. Shall the widow and the orphan cry in vain to-day, because yesterday you gave in charity what was wasted in debauch?

We believe, however, after a careful examination, that the number of cases where money has been misapplied in the erection of churches, in distant places, is very small. In almost every instance, the amount of good accomplished has been, at least, equal to the sacrifice incurred. There are some who think otherwise, and to witness the cool manner in which they estimate the amount of good done and of money expended in each particular instance, has often surprised us. It is a sort of calculation which we do not quite understand, as it is commonly conducted, although we wish to make all allowances for caution in giving. It is, as if one should hold up a balance, with a certain amount of money in one scale, to see how much spiritual good conferred is necessary to weigh it down; in the one scale there are two or three or five thousand dollars; in the other — a soul saved! And in the mind of the calculator, the golden scale is the heavier. Good Heaven! And how many dollars shall a *wise* man give to save the soul of his brother! Tell us, so that we may not be deceived and imposed upon, what is the fair price at which we may venture to buy consolation for a broken heart, or peace for a troubled conscience, or purity for a polluted breast, or faith for a selfish worldling, or light for ignorant superstition? Thy own soul! Thou wouldst not sell it for the whole world; and is the soul of thy brother worth less?

When we can calculate, in money, the worth of air to the lungs, or of food to the stomach, or of light to the

eyes, or of health to the body, we may perhaps, with a show of consistency, weigh spiritual good and gold in the same balance together. There are some, who so love money, that air and food and health are less highly valued; they are the sworn devotees of Mammon, and we do not ask them to give, in the service of God. But those who feel, in their own hearts, what the power and joy of religion are, need only to be pointed to the way by which they can impart them to others, and they are ready, of their own accord, "to do good as God giveth them opportunity."

Another objector takes another ground: "I do not withhold my help," he says, "on account of any such narrow calculations as those to which you refer. I do not like the principle upon which your appeal is founded. I have no sympathy with any thing of a proselyting nature. I am opposed to every thing sectarian. I do not like this missionary spirit."

This objection, under some form, exists in very many minds, and, although unfounded, presents the greatest obstacle that we have to encounter. The dread of sectarianism is fast consuming our zeal. We refuse to do anything for the cause of Christ, because, strangely enough, we fear that we shall, at the same time, disseminate our own opinions. But to what an unchristian posture are we thus brought! On the one hand, we will not support missions when conducted by those who differ from us in faith, because we cannot consistently contribute to the spread of what we believe error; on the other hand, we will do nothing for the spread of what we believe truth, because we do not wish to proselyte. And thus it happens that we are resting in idle-

ness. While Christians of every other name are showing their love of God, even if they sometimes overstep the bounds of modesty, by their zeal for truth, we sit coolly at a distance, and look on, as at something in which we have no interest.

God forbid that this should be a literal representation of the true state of the case. But is there not enough truth in it to excite a reasonable fear, lest it may soon be all true? The fear of sectarianism is a wholesome feeling, if not exaggerated; but when exaggerated as it sometimes is, it becomes a worse evil than that which is avoided. We had better be a little sectarian than to be utterly indifferent about truth; for it is better to have a virtue, mingled with a little error, than not to have it at all. To hesitate whether we shall make a man a Christian, because we cannot do so without making him a Unitarian, is indeed a strange, if not a ludicrous extreme.

It is quite time that we should analyze our feelings and conduct in regard to this subject. There is, or ought to be, a good as well as a bad meaning to the word sectarian. He, who is fully persuaded in his own mind of the truth of his religious faith and feels that it is calculated to exert a peculiarly good influence in society, ought to desire that others should believe with him, and if he labors to effect this end, he does no more than every Christian should do. Nothing is further from a true Christian spirit than indifference about truth. Christ himself was a missionary of religious truth. "For this end I was born," said he, "and for this cause I came into the world, to bear witness to the truth." The apostles, all of them, were missionaries. They spent

their lives in making proselytes to the truth ; not because they were striving after the glory of a long train of followers, but because they felt the truth to possess a saving efficacy, and were therefore ready to endure bonds and imprisonment for its sake. If this was sectarianism, God grant that it may be abundantly increased among us. We cannot have too much of that sectarianism which is a willingness to make sacrifices for the establishment and reign of Christian truth and love. It is true that, with many, religious zeal is no better than party spirit ; but their error will not excuse our idleness. In Jesus Christ we have the example of one who was zealous, yet always mild and forbearing ; in like manner, we may labor and ought to labor, zealously, in his cause, and yet have none of those narrow and exclusive feelings, which are abhorrent to the Christian character. So let us labor ; and let no one ever betray his ignorance of the Christian's calling and of the spirit of his master, so much as to boast that he has nothing of the missionary spirit ! If he has not this, the more is his shame, the greater is his misfortune.

From these general remarks, we willingly turn to our particular subject. Concerning this, we feel entitled to speak confidently. We do not argue from mere theory, nor from the report of others, but give the result of our own observations, which have not been confined to one place, but have been extended to many parts of the Mississippi Valley. If, to those who have never been west of the mountains, our language should seem too strong, we reply, that to our own minds no language, that we can use, seems strong enough. When we speak of the importance of establishing religious and moral

institutions in the West, now, before it is yet too late, we feel as if no words can be too earnest; exaggeration seems almost impossible. We think, that we are not liable to the charge of presumption, when we say that every citizen of the United States, no matter where he lives, or to what sect he belongs, ought to feel a deep interest in this cause, and use his strength to the utmost, in every wise mode, for its promotion.

The call is sounding now through the land, Rise and be doing! If you love your country, if you love your brethren, if you love your God, if you love yourselves, hold not back! Ye husbandmen of the Lord, whose granaries are filled by his bounty, send out into the new and fertile world, the seed of religion and good order, and presently there shall spring up a harvest richer than the world ever saw! The call is passing through the land, uttered in many tones, urged by many reasons. Nor is it urged in vain. Already many laborers have gone out and are working with good intent and good effect. Their labors have been greatly blessed. The heaving ocean is already beginning to feel the bounds which they are building around it. But the workmen are yet too few. The vast field in which they stand surrounds them, as the waters of the deep surround a few scattered vessels. A great part of the vineyard is yet without a hand to cultivate it, and the vines are even now struggling with the rank weeds which spring up luxuriantly. They cry aloud for the sickle and the ploughshare and the seed, which is the word of God. Who are they who shut their ears to the voice? Are they Patriots? Are they Christians? Are they men who think and look forward into future years? Are

they philanthropists? What, and who are they? It cannot be that they are any other than the thoughtless and the selfish, who either do not think, or do not care for posterity; for no others, when the appeal is brought near them, can help giving an answer, both with their hearts and their hands.

This appeal we would urge as earnestly as we can. Although the claims of the West are much spoken of, it is a subject not soon exhausted, and, as yet, but imperfectly understood. We repeat the sentiment before advanced, that there never was a cause possessing stronger claims upon every American citizen, than that which has for its object the establishment of religious and moral institutions in the West. The greatness of the work, the motives for undertaking it, the facilities for its performance, all urge us to contribute our part towards it.

The immense extent of the Western valley and its almost inexhaustible resources make it easy to be foreseen, that the strength of the Union, both in numbers and riches, will be, at no very distant day, centred there. From the remarkable fertility of the soil, which is such that the farmer, with one half the labor, is rewarded by a crop more than double what is usual in this section of the country; from the great facility of internal intercourse by the many rivers which wind through every part of the interior, by means of which, produce can be sent from every settlement, at small expense, to the best markets, and goods readily obtained, in return, from the large importing cities, at prices but little in advance of the original cost; from the richness of the mines of various sorts of iron, copper, lead and coal, which are found in great

abundance, and afford every advantage for the establishment of all kinds of manufactories; from the variety in climate and productions and the general healthfulness of the whole region;—from these and other causes, the West is capable of supporting, and will, at some future day, support a larger population than any other portion of the world, of equal magnitude. There is no natural advantage, which can contribute to national greatness, which is not found there. It is now but half explored; its riches are not only undeveloped but are hardly half known, and yet, even now, the Western States hold a conspicuous place in the Union. Their greatness is but begun. The day is perhaps not far distant, when a direct intercourse will be opened between the mouth of the Columbia river, west of the Rocky mountains, and the East Indies, by means of which the wealth of Asia will be brought across the Pacific and carried into the heart of the Western States more easily and at less cost than to the Atlantic cities. On the other side, the great chain of the Northern Lakes, stretching over Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, is already the road by which communication with the North and East is carried on, and, when a short canal, already in progress, is completed, there will be an uninterrupted water intercourse from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the City of New Orleans.

Of a country such as this, whose capabilities are unbounded, how is it possible to speak too enthusiastically, or to predict too glorious things? He who travels through it, as his eye dwells upon its various resources, if he is an American, feels his heart swell with pride at the thought of what it will be, when filled by the myriads which it will soon contain; but if he is a Christian, will

he not unconsciously check the half uttered boast, to pray that where all other riches are found, the riches of morality and religion may also be multiplied — that numbers may be restrained by good order, and strength be hallowed by the love of God?

The growth of the West has thus far been commensurate with its natural advantages. Last summer, we met and conversed with a venerable man,* who, fifty years ago, entered the wild West as a missionary. He could recall to remembrance the day when Pittsburg was a little fort, with but one brick house near it; when Cincinnati did not exist; when Kentucky and Tennessee were inhabited only by savages and a wandering race of rude, half-savage hunters; when Indiana and Illinois were almost unentered by civilized man, and Missouri was known only as a far off territory, occupied by a few French settlements. Upon what a different scene do his eyes now look! A nation grown up before his sight! How marvellous a change to be witnessed by one man!

This unprecedented growth of the West, as it has not proceeded from whim, but is the result of sufficient causes, which continue to act, must go on. It will go on with increasing rapidity, until that whole vast country is covered by a thickly settled population. If we look forward the length of one life, we lose ourselves in a vision of future greatness. Upon moderate calculations, many of those who are now children will live to see the day when the west will contain fifty millions of souls. When that day shall have come, woe will be to this Union, if an enlightened, moral and religious tone

* The Catholic Bishop of Kentucky.

of feeling does not prevail among that people, for the sceptre will be in their hands, and from them shall our laws come forth.

The hasty glance which has now been taken at the resources and future prospects of the West, is enough, we are sure, to make every reflecting man feel the importance of the establishment of religious institutions throughout its borders; because this is the only means by which an enlightened public opinion can be promoted. The imperative necessity of their being immediately established, and this, in part, by the friends of religion who live in the older States, will be felt, if we look at the nature of the population by which the Western States are now occupied.

We have no design of depreciating the character of the Western people for the sake of exciting the sympathy of the East. Large sums of money have been thus obtained, through means of highly colored pictures of the vice, the irreligion, the licentiousness, the ignorance of the West, and perhaps this is the easiest and most effectual way of getting what is wanted. From doing evil, good sometimes comes. Some churches have been thus built, which would not have been built, if the truth had been told. But for our part, we will not speak falsehood for the sake of promoting the cause of truth. We have learnt to know the Western character well enough to love it, and will bring no slanderous reports against it, whatever object may be in view. Nevertheless we argue that the nature of the case is such that it is right and necessary for the older states to give their assistance, in the promotion of religion and education in the West. It is not because the present population is distinguished

for ignorance and vice, but because circumstances are necessarily unfavorable to the early establishment of those institutions, which are indispensable to the formation of a sound public opinion and to the proper moral and religious education of the young; and, moreover, because the rapidity with which the Western States are settling is such, that except immediate exertions are made, it will soon be too late to labor with advantage.

The Valley of the Mississippi is now the grand resort of the young and enterprising of all parts of the world. They are pouring in like a flood, wave after wave; hundreds of thousands yearly, in an ever increasing current, seeking for a home in the new country. Of the three millions now there, only a very small part are natives; nearly all are emigrants from the older states, or from Europe; the majority are young persons, not yet in the prime of life. These multitudes are composed of the most heterogeneous materials, having the most diverse tastes and prejudices and opinions concerning every subject, but most of all concerning religion. They are brought together in the same community, having little in common, except their object of pursuit. This is the same with all. All are led by the same motive, all influenced by the same desire — self-advancement, the acquisition of wealth. Now, without going further in our description, we ask, are not these circumstances singularly unfavorable to the present establishment of religious and literary institutions? We grant that the population, which we have described, is the best possible for the rapid development of the physical resources of a country, as it is proved by the great prosperity of the West. The forests are every where falling, villages

every where rising up; the most remote rivers are navigated, the soil and the mines are yielding up their wealth to the industry and enterprise of man. In all these respects, every thing will certainly go on well. But ought it to cause any surprise, if the spiritual interests of man were to remain neglected and comparatively forgotten? Where every thing is unsettled and new, would it be wonderful if religion and education were left to accident? Is it to be expected of men who are drawn together from all parts of the world by the prospect of a temporal gain, that they will immediately turn their attention to the erection of churches and schools? We would not have it inferred from such questions, that the Western people are actually indifferent to these subjects. Nothing could be more untrue. They are beginning to feel very deeply the duty laid upon them to provide for the spiritual wants of the rising generation, and when we take into consideration the real difficulties of the case, we are astonished at the progress already made. Ten times as much has been done as could reasonably have been expected. But still we say, that the circumstances are such that they cannot do for themselves all which is needed, and which the welfare of the country demands to be done immediately. Here we rest the foundation of what has been called the *claims* of the West upon the East. An appeal so strongly based, let no one lightly set aside.

Further; the difficulties, now enumerated, are much increased by what we may term the migrating disposition of a new population. The inhabitants of the Western cities and towns do not have that feeling of permanent settlement, which exists in older places, and by which

they would be led to look upon their present abode as that of their whole lives. Very many of them expect to return again to the homes of their childhood; a still larger number, having left one home, are always ready to leave another, if inducement should offer; and in point of fact, nothing is more common than for families to move from one town to another, for the sake of commercial or other advantages. Of course there cannot be the same interest felt about the establishment of permanent institutions in such a community, even in proportion to their means and general interest in education and religion, as in our older cities, where he who builds a church is sure that it will be a legacy bequeathed to his children's children. This obstacle is, indeed, daily becoming less, but at present it operates to a degree far greater than would be at first supposed. It is among the greatest barriers to the religious improvement of the West.

Still another difficulty which is felt especially in regard to the building of churches, is this. The majority of the Western people are attached to no particular sect. They either left their homes when too young to have formed such attachments, or they have taken advantage of the entire freedom from restraint, found in their new abodes, to cast away their hereditary creeds, which they felt as shackles on the mind, and have neglected to unite themselves to any other form of doctrine. Of course, no great activity can be expected from these. For although they have a general respect for religion, and wish it well, they are often like men who do not know which of several roads to choose, and stand still, making no progress at all. Many, even of the more

educated part of the Western people, are of this description. We should do them great injustice if we called them skeptics, which is the mildest of the terms heaped upon them by many religionists; for although they are settled in no belief, they have little of that dogged, captious, narrow minded spirit which characterizes skepticism properly so called. The worst word that can be applied to them is *indifference*; and even this is too harsh, if we look at them in their more thoughtful hours. This is enough however, to prevent us from placing our chief reliance upon them.

But while such men are unwilling to do much for themselves, we must not forget that they are the very persons, who need a good religious influence to be exerted on them. The state of indifference will fast degenerate into a positive disregard for religion, and their children, if left to grow up without religious instruction, will become the victims of unbelief and immorality. Already, in some sections of the West, has this begun to be proved, with painful certainty, and nothing under heaven can prevent its going on, except the strenuous exertions of good men in all parts of our land. Let these exertions be made before the evil has grown too formidable to be resisted. Now is the accepted time. The reverence for religion is not yet lost, and almost all are ready to go and hear what each new sect has to say. If many turn away from religion, it is not so much on account of enmity to Christianity, as aversion to particular creeds. Every new church which is built exerts a good influence on many before untouched, because it removes some objections which they felt against other churches, and satisfies wants which other churches

passed over. Especially do we believe, that the preaching of the Gospel as it is understood by Unitarians, embracing a system of religion addressed not only to the heart but to the intellect, which is meant to be received not blindly but thoughtfully, and which is inseparable from charity to all men, would be conducive of the greatest benefit to hundreds, now out of the pale of any church, and who are already almost beyond the reach of religion. This opinion has been expressed by many; and by some persons, with much greater emphasis. After having travelled in the West, and seen how many reject the doctrines we reject, they have returned with the report, that it is only needful to proclaim our faith, in order to have it eagerly embraced by multitudes. We do not say this, nor have we any such hopes. We know that the sleep of indifference is a sound sleep, which often will remain unbroken by any voice, until the trumpet which wakes the dead shall sound. We know also that one may deny every error that ever crept into religion, and yet be not a step nearer the truth. God save us from a negative religion, for it is almost worse than none at all! It would be folly, therefore, in us, to speak as if the whole West were ready to rise up and receive our faith. But after making every allowance, we still think that there is a field of more than ordinary usefulness before us. If any religion ever prospers in the West, it must be one at the same time rational and fervent, for men both reason and feel strongly there; it must at the same time be free from bigotry and full of zeal; and such is our faith, when truly understood. Upon those who have long remained indifferent to religion, we fear, indeed, that we can exert only an

indirect influence; but there are very many who would gladly be religious if they knew how to be so without throwing away reason, who will hear our voice, while they are deaf to almost every other. And what is above all worthy of attention — by the establishment in the Western valley of an enlightened, fervent religion, whether it be of our denomination or any other, the crowds of emigrants, who are still rushing in, will find themselves under a strong religious influence from the beginning, and will be saved from that carelessness about their spiritual nature which begins in sleep and ends in death. It is easier to prevent than to cure. By comparatively little exertion now, institutions may be built up, which will be instrumental in giving a tone to public feelings and morals, and, perhaps, of saving our country from the greatest troubles. The character, which is assumed by the West, during the next thirty years, that is, by the generation which has now begun to grow up, will probably be a permanent one. At the present moment, it is capable of being made more noble and elevated than any other in the world, if proper means are taken; all the elements, all the opportunities are there; but if left to go on at hazard, the degradation may be great, like that of the arch-angel ruined. If the time should ever come, when irreligion and licentious freedom prevail over that great region, and hold their blighting rod over the whole nation, O, how will the men of that day mourn, that their fathers did not send out a moiety of their wealth, to aid in building up the churches of Christ, which, as a little leaven in the measure of meal, would have leavened the whole mass! Now, happily, is the time, not for regret or self-reproach, but for activity and Christian sacrifice.

It may be expected by some that we speak of the Catholic influence in the West, as a motive for sending out counteracting influences. The possibility of Catholicism gaining the ascendency in that great section of our country, by the influx of an ignorant foreign population, would indeed be a sufficient reason for our using every justifiable means to prevent such a result, which might subject the country to the greatest inconvenience. But of the probability of such a result, we are not competent to judge. We are told, indeed, by sectarists, that the Catholics have evil designs of self-aggrandizement, even in their best institutions. Perhaps it is so; but, until they exhibit such designs by other modes than doing good, we do not feel authorized to join in preaching a crusade against them. It is more important to keep religious party-spirit and bigotry from the West, than to have a thousand preachers raising the war-cry against the Pope. We misunderstand the Western character, if religious intolerance can ever do any good there.

Without encroaching upon the doubtful ground of direct opposition to other sects, we have abundant motive to exert ourselves. Our remarks have purposely been made very general, but their application is easy. There are now, in the West, many places, in each of which there ought to be a Unitarian Church and Preacher. To such places, let missionaries be sent, and other assistance be given, if needed. In almost every instance, more than half the necessary funds can be found on the spot. As Christians and Americans, it is our duty, so far as we have the power, to supply the deficiency.

1st Series. No. 118.

ON

DENYING THE LORD JESUS.

BY THE LATE BERNARD WHITMAN.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

MAY, 1837.

Price 6 cents.

Tuttle, Dennett & Chisholm....Power Press....17 School St....Boston.

ON

DENYING THE LORD JESUS.

"WHOSOEVER shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Is there a sincere Christian on earth, who would knowingly deny the Lord Jesus? No. I cannot think there is a true believer, in any denomination, who would designedly be guilty of such exceeding sinfulness. But, my friends, are we in no danger of ignorantly denying him? I fear we are. When I observe the weakness, and ignorance, and depravity of mankind; when I witness the mighty influence of prejudice, and interest, and party spirit; when I feel in myself the powerful effects of early instruction, and early impressions, and early associations, I am *compelled* to fear we are in great danger of unintentionally denying the Lord Jesus. Fearing this; and also realizing the value of christian truth; knowing my accountableness to my heavenly Father; and solemnly impressed with the worth of immortal souls, I have selected this infinitely important subject for our present consideration. My inquiries will be guided by the sacred scriptures. And I trust you will honestly compare my statements and conclusions

with this unerring standard of truth and duty; if they do not coincide with the plain and uniform declarations of inspiration, you are bound to reject them as erroneous; nay, if you receive them as true, you do it on your peril; but if they are in perfect accordance with the instructions of Moses and the Prophets, Jesus and his Apostles, you are bound to receive them as true; nay, if you reject them as erroneous, you do it on your peril.

You may deny the Lord Jesus in *two* different ways; either in word, or in deed. If you contradict his declarations, you deny him in *word.* If you disobey his commands, you deny him in *deed.* Let us now refer to some of those examples of denial which are recorded for our admonition and warning.

I. An instance of the first kind of denial is found in the tenth chapter of John's Gospel. The Jews accused Jesus of *making himself God!* In so doing they contradicted his declarations; and consequently denied the Lord Jesus.

1. The circumstances were these. Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch. The Jews assembled around him; and wished to know if he was indeed the Christ. He replied that he had already answered their inquiry; and that the works, which he performed in his Father's name, were also sufficient proof of his Messiahship. He then accused them of unbelief, because they were not of his fold; and added, that his sheep should never perish. Why? Because "my Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Because he uttered these words, the Jews immediately *accused him of making himself God!* He instantly denied the truth of their charge, in his usual mild and reasoning manner. "Is it not written in your law, 'I said ye are Gods.' If he called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of *him* whom the *Father* hath *sanctified*, and *sent* into the world, thou blasphemest, because I *said* I am the *son* of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." In this refutation of their accusation, you notice *three* things. First, he *denied calling himself* God. He had merely called God his Father, and asserted that his Father was greater than all, and then added, I and my Father are one; not one *person*, for he had uniformly spoken of himself and his Father as two distinct persons; not one *God*, for he had spoken of *receiving* sheep from the *Father*; and not one equal being with God, for he had declared that his *Father* was *greater* than *all*; but simply *one* in affection, and design, and operation. Secondly, he *denied being God.* He asserted that he was *sanctified* and *sent* into the world *by the Father*; and if he was *dependent* on his Father for his *commission* and *ability* to execute it, he could not be the almighty God. And thirdly, he refuted the charge of blasphemy, from the scriptures. He had called himself the *son* of God. The scriptures had called *men gods*, merely because they received the word of God; while his miraculous works were sufficient proof of his being *sent* by the Father. Because the Jews perverted the natural meaning of his words, and contradicted his declarations, they denied the Lord Jesus. John x. 23, 37.

2. If you say that Jesus is God, you contradict the declarations of Moses and the Prophets. They speak of one infinite God; and one Messiah, whom the infinite God would bring into existence, and qualify to be the Saviour of the world. Of his origin and office, a clear intimation is given by Moses. "The *Lord thy God* will *raise up* unto thee *a Prophet* from the midst of thee, of *thy brethren like unto me*; unto him shall ye hearken And *he shall speak* unto them *all that I command* him." In Jesus, this prophecy was literally fulfilled. And if he was a Prophet, made like his brethren, and spoke not his own words, but the commands of his Father, he could not be the infinite God. A still clearer description of him is given by Isaiah. "The *spirit* of the *Lord God* is upon me; because the *Lord hath anointed* me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he *has sent me* to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." All this proved true. Jesus received the spirit of the Lord at his baptism; and immediately proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation. To these two prophecies our Saviour referred, as peculiarly descriptive of his person and office. They fairly prove that he was not God; but *wholly dependent* on his Father for *all things*. All the prophecies concerning Christ are of a similar character. In all, he is spoken of as a created, dependent being; and not once as the supreme Jehovah. Jesus came not to destroy the law and prophets; but to fulfil them. If therefore, you say that Jesus is God, you contradict the uniform declarations of Moses and the Prophets; and consequently, you deny the Lord Jesus. Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Isaiah lxi. 1.

3. If you say that Jesus is God, you contradict his own declarations. Speaking of God, he said — "The Lord *our* God is *one Lord.*" Did he declare himself to be this one Lord? Let us attend to his teachings. Speaking of himself and his Father, he said — "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of *two* men is true. *I* am *one* that *beareth witness* of myself; and the *Father* that sent me, *beareth witness* of me." Therefore he and the Father are *two distinct persons.* Speaking of his existence, he said — "As the Father *hath* life in himself, so hath he *given* to the son to have life in himself." If he was dependent on the Father for *existence*, he cannot be the *self-existent* God. Speaking of his continuance, he said — "As the *living* Father hath sent me, and *I live by the Father.*" If he was *dependent* on the Father, for the *preservation of his life*, he cannot be the *independent* God. Speaking of his miraculous powers, he said — "*I can of mine ownself do nothing.*" "*The Father* that dwelleth in me *he* doeth the works." If he was wholly *dependent* on his Father for his *power*, he cannot be the *almighty* God. Speaking of his religion, he said — "My *doctrine* is *not mine;* but *his that sent me.*" If he was *dependent* on his Father for his *wisdom*, he cannot be the *only wise* God. Speaking of his goodness, he said — "Why callest thou *me* good; there is none good but *one*; that is *God.*" If he did not possess *infinite goodness*, he cannot be the *perfect* God. Speaking of his knowledge, he said — "Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no *man*, no, not the *angels* which are in heaven, neither the SON, but the Father." If he did *not know all things*, he cannot be the *omniscient* God. If then, you believe his own

words, you cannot believe that he is the self-existent, independent, almighty, all wise, all perfect, omniscient God. But to put the question beyond all dispute, he declared in so many words, that his *Father* was *the only true God.* "*Father* — this is life eternal, to know *thee*, THE ONLY TRUE GOD; and Jesus Christ whom *thou hast sent.*" If the Father is the only true God, then Jesus is not the true God; and no third part of the true God. All these are his own explicit declarations. *All* his instructions are in perfect accordance with these quotations. Not once, did he declare himself to be God. From his own words, therefore, it is *undeniably* proved, that he is not God, but on the contrary, that he is wholly dependent on his Father. If then you say he is God, you contradict his plain, uniform, explicit declarations; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. Mark xii. 29. John v. 26.; vi. 57; v. 30; xiv. 10; vii. 16. Mark x. 18; xiii. 32. John xvii. 13.

4. If you say that Jesus is God, you contradict the declarations of the apostles. They preached Christ to four different classes of hearers; to Jews, and proselytes, and heathen, and converts. Hear how Peter preached Christ to the Jews, on the day of Pentecost. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; *Jesus* of Nazareth, *a man approved of God* among you, by miracles, and signs, and wonders, which *God did by him* in the midst of you." If God *approved him*, and wrought miracles *by him*, he surely cannot himself be that God. Hear how the same apostle preached Christ to the proselyte Cornelius. "*God anointed Jesus* of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the

Devil; for *God was with him.*" If he was dependent on God for his miraculous powers, he cannot be that God. Hear how Paul preached Christ to the heathen Athenians. God commandeth all men to repent, because he will judge the world "by *that man whom he hath ordained;* whereof he hath given assurance to all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." Not a hint is yet given of his being God. Hear how the same apostle preached Jesus to christian converts. Unto "us there is *but* ONE GOD, the FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him; and *one Lord Jesus Christ* by whom are all things, and we by him." Here is a positive declaration that the Father only is God; and that Jesus is the instrument *by whom* he communicates spiritual blessings. Hear the charge of this same apostle to a young minister of the Gospel. "There is *one God* and *one mediator* between *God* and *men, the man Christ Jesus.*" Jesus does not mediate between himself and *his* creatures; but between *God* and *his* children. Thus you see that the apostles explicitly declared that Jesus was not God; but a dependent being. All their instructions are in perfect accordance with these quotations. In no instance have they declared Jesus to be the supreme God. Read the Acts of the apostles. This contains the history of their preaching for about thirty years. Examine their discourses carefully, and see, if during this whole period, they even once hinted that Jesus was God. Then read their epistles. When you find a difficult passage, look at the sense and connexion. Interpret obscure sentences by plain ones. And in this way, see if it is even once hinted that Jesus was the infinite God. And can you suppose they would

withhold important truth; or inculcate error? No. For Jesus promised them — "Lo I am with *you* always, even unto the end of the world" — or age. If then you say that Jesus is God, you contradict the plain and uniform declarations of the inspired apostles; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. Acts ii. 22; x. 38; xvii. 31. 1 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Matt. xxviii. 20.

5. If you say that Jesus is God, you contradict all the remarkable facts of his history. God cannot *receive* the holy spirit, but the *spirit was given* to Jesus without measure. God *cannot be tempted*; but Jesus was tempted in all points as we are. God cannot *receive* assistance from any being; but an *angel strengthened* Jesus. God cannot *suffer* pain; but Jesus *suffered* exceeding agony. God cannot be *sent* by any one; but Jesus was *sent* by the Father. God cannot be *anointed*; but Jesus *was anointed* by God. God cannot *be murdered* by his dependent creatures; but Jesus *was crucified* and *slain* by wicked hands. God cannot *ascend* to any place; but Jesus *ascended to his* God and Father. God cannot *sit at his own right hand;* but Jesus *is seated at the right hand* of God. God cannot *pray* to any one; but Jesus *still prays* to his Father. These facts undeniably prove that Jesus is not God; but on the contrary, that he is dependent on God for all things. And if you say he is God, you contradict all these facts; and consequently, deny the Lord Jesus.

Perhaps you will tell me that the titles, attributes, offices, works, and words of Jesus seem to imply that he is God. Let us attend to these particulars.

1. You say that Jesus is sometimes called God. True. This name is also given to mere human beings.

The Almighty said to Moses — "I have made thee a *God* to Pharaoh." And to the Jews he gave this command — "Thou shalt not revile the *Gods;*" meaning the magistrates. If therefore the application of this title to Jesus proves him to be the infinite God, then Moses and the magistrates are proved to be infinite Gods. This conclusion, you cannot admit. You must therefore conclude that the *name* is applied *in an inferior sense to created beings.* It is so applied to Jesus. Turn to the first of Hebrews. You say he is there called God. In the very next verse you read these words; "Therefore *God,* even THY GOD, *hath anointed* thee with the oil of gladness *above thy fellows.*" If there was a God above Jesus, by whom he was anointed, surely he could not be that supreme God. And if he was *exalted* over his *fellows,* or equals, he must be a dependent being. You see, therefore, that the name God is applied in this place, in an inferior sense. And instead of proving Jesus to be God, proves directly the contrary. In Isaiah, you read this sentence. "Unto us a *child is born* — and his name *shall be called* — the *mighty God.*" It does not *read* that this *child,* either *was,* or *is* or *ever will be,* the mighty *God;* but simply that his *name* should be so *called.* You will find no difficulty in understanding this passage, when you notice the lofty names which the Jews gave, not only to their children, but to places and inanimate objects. Elijah means "God the Lord;" and Jerusalem is called "the Lord our righteousness." But you do not suppose that either this person, or this place is really Jehovah? Neither can you believe the *child* is the mighty God. So in *every* instance in which Jesus is called God; a moment's examination will con-

vince you that the name is applied in an *inferior* sense. He is indeed called by the most exalted titles; he has indeed received a name which is above every name; but it "*was given him*" by his God and Father. Those very passages, therefore, in which the highest names are given to Jesus, afford positive proof of his inferiority to the Father. And if you say he is God, you contradict the scripture testimony, and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. Ex. vii. 1; xxii. 28. Heb. i. 9. Isaiah ix. 6. Jeremiah xxxiii. 16. Phil. ii. 9.

A few other passages occur in which the name of God seems, at first view, to be applied to Jesus. Let us give them a fair examination. In the first of John, you read — "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." At first sight, you might think the *word* meant the *son*. But you will be convinced that this is impossible, if you will put *son* in the place of *word*, and *Father*, or *Father* and *holy spirit*, in the room of *God*. In the first instance, it will read — In the beginning was the *son*, and the *son* was with the *Father*, and the *son was the Father*. To say the *son was the Father*, is false and absurd. Try the other method. In the beginning was the son, and the son was with the Father and the holy spirit, and the *son was the Father and holy spirit*. This is still worse. To say the *son was the Father and the holy spirit*, is not only false and absurd, but nonsensical. You must therefore conclude the *word* cannot mean the *son in any sense*. And this conclusion may be confirmed by other passages from the same gospel. Only a few verses below, John declares — "No man hath seen *God* at any time; but the only begotten *son* had declared the Father. If the son was

God, he had been seen by this very apostle. But he informs us — not that the son was God — or the Father; but that he had manifested the Father's perfections to the world; the Father's *wisdom* in his instructions, the Father's *power* in his miraculous works; and the Father's *moral goodness* in his character; so that whoever had seen the son, had *seen all of the Father that could be manifested to mortal eyes;* but the son was not himself that Father, and no third part of that Father. John also said that he wrote his Gospel, expressly that "ye might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the son of God.*" If he is the Christ or anointed, he can be no third part of that God by whom he was anointed; and if he was the *son* of God, he could not be the God and Father on whom he was dependent for existence. And you cannot think the apostle so inconsistent, as to suppose he would *begin* his history, by asserting that Jesus was God, and *conclude*, by saying he had composed his work to prove directly the contrary; even that Jesus was *the anointed son* of God? But the plain, unequivocal assertion of Jesus, that *his Father* was the *only true God*, is sufficient of itself to dispel all doubt on the meaning of this passage. The "*word*" therefore means the "power of God considered as in action;" that wisdom and power which have ever been with God, even an essential part of himself; and which were displayed in creation, in providence, in the Jewish dispensation; but especially, which dwelt in Jesus, and were manifested in *his* words and works and character. John i. 1, 18; xx. 31.

In the same Gospel, you find Thomas exclaiming, on seeing the risen Jesus — "My Lord, and my God." At

first sight, you might think Thomas called Jesus his God. But imagine yourself in a similar situation. Suppose an endeared friend, whom you had committed to the grave, should stand before you in health? You would naturally exclaim — O my friend, and O my God; first expressing your surprise at seeing your friend invested with life: and then your gratitude to God who had wrought the miracle. This affords an explanation of the sentence. Thomas first exclaimed, my Lord, meaning Jesus; and then, my God, meaning the *Father*, who *had raised Jesus from the dead*, as the apostles *uniformly* affirmed. Not once have they said, either that *God* was *crucified*, or that *Jesus restored himself* to life. Do you say that Thomas spoke directly to Jesus? So did Jonathan speak directly to David in these words. "And Jonathan said unto David, *O Lord God of Israel*, when I have sounded my Father." Does this prove David to be the Lord God of Israel? This you cannot admit. Can you then admit that Thomas, educated in the belief of one eternal, spiritual Father, believed that this Lord God of heaven and earth had been crucified, and laid in the grave three days? Why not be consistent; and exercise as much common sense in the former case, as in the latter? Then you will come to the conclusion, that the word God, in this passage, does not belong to Jesus in any sense. John xx. 8. 1 Sam. xx. 12.

In the book of Acts, you read these words — "to feed the church of *God* which he hath purchased with his own *blood*." In this passage the word *God*, should be changed to the word *Lord*. For *Lord* is the true meaning of the *original* Greek word. You could not however, be led into error by the verse as it now stands.

For you would recollect that *God* is a *spirit*; and can have neither *flesh* nor *blood*. Especially would you remember that the infinite *Creator* could not be murdered by his dependent *creatures*. You would therefore conclude, either that the word *God* was applied to Jesus in an *inferior* sense, or was a mistranslation. Acts xx. 28.

In the Epistle to the Romans, you find this sentence—"Whose are the Father's, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; who is over all, God blessed, forever." At first sight, you might think Paul declared that Jesus was God. But you will be convinced to the contrary, if you look at the sense and connexion. Paul said Christ was a regular descendant of the Israelites. This is plain. Now could he say in the same breath, that THIS JEWISH DESCENDANT WAS GOD ALMIGHTY! Can you believe the inspired apostle would utter such absurdity? Perhaps you will say he spoke of his human nature, because he used the phrase — "as concerning the flesh." I take you on your own ground. In the verse but one above, Paul speaks of *his "kinsmen according to the flesh."* Had his kinsmen two natures? If you cannot admit this, you cannot *consistently* admit that this phrase means any thing more than *natural descent*. In this last sense, and in no other, is it ever used by the sacred writers. Now you must conclude, either that the apostle declared a regular descendant of the Jews was God Almighty — a shocking absurdity; or that he did not call Christ God? What then is the true meaning of the sentence? Let me give you a translation of the whole passage, as corrected by a distingished scholar. "Who are Israelites, whose was the adoption,

and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of the temple, and the promises, whose were the fathers, and of whom was Christ according to the flesh; HE WHO WAS OVER ALL BEING GOD BLESSED FOR EVER." The original admits this rendering. Thus you obtain a natural, a consistent, an important meaning. But if you make the word God refer to Christ, you prove too much; for you prove that he is GOD over ALL, *even over his own* FATHER, who is repeatedly called the ONE, ONLY TRUE GOD. If, therefore, you would make the apostle rational, and consistent with himself, you must conclude the word God, in this place, does not mean Jesus. Rom. ix. 3, 6.

In an epistle to Timothy, you read these words — "*God* manifest in the flesh." In this passage the word *God* should be changed to the words "*he who*." This is the correct translation of the *original* Greek word: the sentence, however, as it now reads, would not lead you into error. For it asserts that the person who was manifested in the flesh, "was justified in the spirit;" and also, "*received up into glory*." Now to say that *God was received up into glory*, is an absurdity. For he was never out of glory; he fills immensity; he is in all places, and in all places glorious and infinitely happy. You would, therefore, conclude, either that the word God was used for Jesus, in an *inferior* sense, or that it was a mistranslation. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

In the first epistle of John, you find this passage. "We know that the *son* of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know *Him that is true;* and we are in *him* that is true — even* in his

* You notice the word *even* was put into our Bible by the translators.

son Jesus Christ. *This* is the *true God* and *eternal life.*" At first view, you might think *this* referred to Jesus, and if so, he would be called the true God. But a moment's attention will convince you to the contrary. For by *Him that is true* must be meant God — the Father. Then if you refer *this* to *Jesus*, you make *him* the *true God;* and you shut out the *Father* from being *any part of God.* This would be false and absurd. You therefore see that *this cannot* refer to *Jesus;* but, to *him that is true* — even to God the Father, whom Jesus declared to be *the only true God.* If the word had been *these* instead of *this*, it might have included *both;* but as the apostle has left it, the Father alone is declared to be the true God. Do you say the word *this usually* refers to the *nearest* antecedent? True. But we do not expect perfect grammatical accuracy in "unlettered" men. John uses the same word in a similar sense in the next epistle. "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. *This* is a *deceiver* and an *antichrist.*" In this passage, if you make *this* refer to the *nearest* antecedent, it will refer to *Jesus;* and make *him* the *deceiver* and *antichrist.* Are you willing to admit this conclusion? No. You know better. Then be consistent; lest the character either of self-deceiver, or something worse, fall upon yourself. You must, therefore, conclude that the word God, in this place, does not refer to Jesus in any sense. 1 John v. 20. 2 John 7.

The last passage I shall notice is this. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

I presume it is known to most of you that this verse was not written by John; that it is no part of the true Bible; that it was put into one manuscript many years after the apostle's death; and in this way came in our English translation. But it is now given up by all persons who make the least pretensions to biblical criticism. It is therefore unnecessary for me to quote the opinions, or even the names of the many learned Trinitarian writers, who have satisfactorily proved this passage to be no part of the true Bible. A distinguished Trinitarian writer in the Eclectic Review, the standard periodical of the orthodox party in England, expresses himself on this question in these words. "Under these circumstances, we are UNSPEAKABLY ASHAMED that any *modern* divines should have fought for the retention of a passage so INDISPUTABLY SPURIOUS." To this expression of orthodox sentiment, I respond a hearty amen. And will only add, that I am *unspeakably ashamed* that any *modern* divine should *quote* a passage so *indisputably spurious*, as a part *of revelation*. 1 John v. 7.

I think I have noticed all the verses which can give you the least trouble in explanation. Let obscure sentences be interpreted by the multitude of plain ones. And do not found your faith upon unintelligible or disconnected sentences.

2. You say that Jesus declared — "I am Alpha and Omega; *the beginning and the end.*" True. But of what is he *the beginning?* Let his own words answer. "These things saith the amen, the faithful and true witness, *the beginning of the creation of God.*" If he is *the beginning of God's creation*, he cannot be the God by whom he was created. And of what is he *the end?* Let

Paul answer. "Then cometh *the end*, when he — Jesus — *shall have delivered up the kingdom to* God, *even the* Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For *he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that *He is excepted which did put all things under him.* And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the son *also himself be subject unto* Him that put all things under him, that *God* may be *all in all.*" If *his kingdom is to end*, then Jesus *is* the end of the gospel dispensation; the end, as well as the beginning. These passages, therefore, explain our Saviour's declaration; and instead of proving him to be God, they *undeniably* prove that he is a created being; that he is dependent on God for all his power; that he will reign until all rational creatures are subdued to God; that he will then deliver up his kingdom to the Father, and, like other intelligent beings, become *subject* to his paternal authority. If you contradict such decisive testimony, you in effect, deny the Lord Jesus. Rev. xxii. 13; iii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

3. You say that Jesus is to judge the world. True. But what does this prove? Paul said to his converts — "Do ye not know that *saints* shall judge the *world?* Know ye not that *we* shall judge *angels?*" Does this prove Paul and the saints to be Gods? No. Then the office of judge does not prove Jesus to be God. But let his own words explain this subject. "The Father judgeth no man; but hath *committed* all judgment unto the *son.*" If the son is dependent on his Father for his commission, he cannot be the independent God; for

nothing can be *committed* to the infinite Jehovah. And why does the Father "*give him authority to execute judgment?*" Hear his answer. "*Because he is the son of man.*" Yes. Because Jesus is the son of man, and was made like his brethren, and could be touched with a feeling of their infirmities; and *not* because he is God, and can know the secrets of all hearts. But if he be not omniscient, how can he possess sufficient knowledge to execute his commission? Hear his own answer. "*I can of mine own self do nothing;* AS I HEAR I JUDGE." If he must *hear* from his Father before he can pronounce sentence, he cannot be the omniscient God. From his own words, therefore, it is plainly proved, that he is wholly dependent on his Father for his commission, and his ability to execute his trust; and that he is appointed to this office because he is the son of man. The apostles *uniformly* preached the same sentiments. Read their discourses and letters with a special reference to this subject. Peter addressed Cornelius in these words. God commanded us to testify that it is Jesus which "*was ordained of God to be the judge* of the quick and dead." This is the plain, uniform, unembarrassed doctrine of revelation. God is the supreme judge of the universe; Jesus is the instrument, the commissioned judge, by whom he judges this world. And if you say that Jesus is God, because he is to judge the world, you contradict his explicit declarations; you deny the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. John v. 22, 30. Acts x. 42.

4. You say that Jesus forgave sins. True. And so did the apostles, if they were faithful in executing their commission. For Jesus said to them — "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosesoever sins

ye retain, they are retained." Are the apostles Gods, because they had power to forgive sins? No. Then Jesus is not God. But let this subject be fully explained by his own words. The Jews accused him of blasphemy because he said to one sick of the palsy — "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Jesus refuted their charge in his reasoning manner. "Whether *is easier*, to say, *thy sins be forgiven thee;* or to say, *arise and walk?* But that *ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.*" His words may be thus paraphrased. Does it require any greater power to forgive sins than to heal diseases? I pronounced forgiveness, that ye might know I possessed power to forgive sins, as well as work miracles. But I am not guilty of blasphemy; for I did this act as the son of man; and not as God, from whom I receive all my power. In this sense was his answer understood by the hearers. For the apostle adds — "When the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and *glorified God* which *had given such power* unto *men.*" It is therefore evident, from the very words of Jesus, that he was dependent on God for his power to forgive sins. And this is the current doctrine of scripture. And if you contradict such divine testimony, you deny the Lord Jesus. Matt. ix. 5, 8. John xx. 23.

5. You say that Jesus wrought miracles. True. And so did Moses, the Prophets, and the apostles. Does this prove them to be Gods? No. Neither does it prove Jesus to be God. Let us attend to his own words on this subject. "When ye have lifted up the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and *that I do nothing of myself.* The *words which the Father hath given me to perform,* testify of me that *the Father hath*

sent me." This must be satisfactory; must convince every fair mind that he was *wholly dependent* on his Father for miraculous powers; and *always* dependent. For when he performed his great miracle, he thus prayed. "Father, I thank thee that *thou hast heard me.* And I know that *thou hearest me* ALWAYS; but *because* of the people that stand by *I said* it, that they may *believe* that thou *hast sent me.*" If his Father *heard* him ALWAYS, then he *always prayed.* In this instance he uttered his prayer aloud — why? That the people might believe — what? — that he could work miracles by his own power? — that he was God? —No. Directly the reverse. That he was *sent* by the God of heaven; and dependent on him for his miraculous powers. And such is the uniform and oft repeated sentiment of his guileless lips. And if you contradict his unequivocal declarations, you deny the Lord Jesus. John vi. 38; v. 36; xi. 41.

6. You say that Jesus declared — "I and my Father are one." True. He also declared that husband and wife were no more *two* but "*one flesh.*" Do you take this expression in its *literal* sense; and really believe that the married couple are but *one person?* Or do you exercise your common sense; and conclude they are, or ought to be *one* in *affection* and *design?* In what sense then are *Jesus* and the *Father one?* Let his own words explain. "Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me, that *they* may be *one,* AS WE ARE. Neither pray I for these alone, but for *them also* which shall believe on me through their word; that THEY ALL may be ONE; AS *thou Father art in me and I in thee, that* THEY ALSO *may be* ONE *in* US." No clearer explanation of our Saviour's declaration need be given.

He prays that his apostles, and all Christians, may be *one* with him and his Father; *in the same manner as he and the Father are one;* that is, *one* in affection, design, spirit, operation; and not *one person* nor *one God.* If, therefore, you quote this saying of Jesus, to prove that he is God, on the same grounds you may prove that the apostles and all Christians are God. But if you do this, you contradict the plain meaning of our Saviour's words; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. John x. 30. Matt. xix. 5. John xvii. 11, 21.

7. You say that Jesus associated his name with his Father's, in the formula of baptism. But what does this prove? If being baptized into the *name* of any person proves that one to be God, then is *Moses* proved to be *God.* For all the Israelites "*were baptized* into *Moses* in the cloud and in the sea." And if associating the name of any one with God, proves the person to be God, then are the Prophets proved to be *Gods.* For the Jews were commanded to "*believe the Lord God,*" and "*his Prophets.*" Then these circumstances will not prove Jesus to be God. Now turn to the place in which he commissioned his Apostles. You see he took all necessary pains to prevent every one from inferring that he was any part of God, merely because his name was associated with his Father's. For he begins his address in these words. "All power *is given* unto me in heaven and in earth." If all power *was given* him, there must have been a time when it was not in his possession. And if so, he could not be the eternal God; for God must have had all power from eternity. And if anything could *be given* to Jesus, he could not be God; for nothing can be given to the *original possessor of all*

things. And if power was given to Jesus by his Father, he must be a dependent being; dependent on his Father for this gift. All this is plain. In this sense, the apostles understood his words. And if you will turn to their first and their last sermons, you will learn how they explained their commission. Instead of declaring, that there was one God, the Father, son, and holy spirit; they *uniformly* declared that there was but ONE GOD, the FATHER; that HE *had raised* up Jesus to be a Saviour; and had wrought miracles *by him*, with his holy spirit, to convince the world of his Messiahship. So that this passage, instead of proving Jesus to be God proves him to be dependent for his power on his God and Father. And it is truth to declare, that the names, attributes, offices, works, and words of Jesus, instead of proving him to be God, afford the most satisfactory evidence of his inferiority to the Father; and his dependence on him for these very names, offices, works and words.

What then must be our conclusion. The testimony of the Bible is uniform and consistent. It proves that there is but one God, the Father. It also proves that Jesus is the *son* of God; a distinct being from his Father; and wholly dependent on him for his existence, his preservation, his power, his wisdom, and knowledge. If, therefore, I act like a rational being, and submit to reasonable scriptural evidence, I must conclude, that Jesus, is not the supreme God. And as an honest man, I *dare* not reject this conclusion. I *dare* not contradict the explicit declarations of Moses and the Prophets, Jesus and the Apostles. And when Jesus unequivocally declares, that the *Father is the only true God*, I *dare* not

accuse him of uttering falsehood. I *dare* not unite with the Jews in *accusing him of making himself God.* For I would not knowingly deny the Lord Jesus.

II. Another instance of the first kind of denial is recorded in the fifth chapter of John's gospel. The Jews accused Jesus of *making himself equal with God!* By so doing, they contradicted his declarations; and consequently denied the Lord Jesus.

1. The circumstances were these. Jesus healed an impotent man on the Sabbath day. This so enraged the Jews, that they sought to take his life. He defended his benevolent deed with this observation. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." They immediately accused him of *making himself equal with God!* He quickly denied the truth of their accusation, with his strongest affirmation. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the SON *can do nothing of himself.*" A more explicit, direct, positive denial, he could not have given. For if *the son can do nothing of himself*, he surely cannot be *equal* with God, who can of himself do all things. In substance, therefore, Jesus declared that he had not made himself equal with God; and that he was not his equal in any sense; because he could do nothing without his assistance. The Jews contradicted the natural meaning of his words; and consequently denied the Lord Jesus. John v. 17, 19.

2. If you say that Jesus is equal with God, you contradict the declarations of Moses and the Prophets. By the word *God*, when applied to the supreme Being, I understand one self-existent, uncreated, underived, eternal, all-perfect, all pervading spirit. To say this in-

finite being is equal with himself, is perfect nonsense. If then you say that Jesus is equal to *God*, he must be a *second* self-existent, uncreated, underived, eternal, all-perfect, all-pervading spirit; and consequently, a *second Deity!* But the infinite God declared "*I* am *God*, and there is *none* else." If Jesus is equal with God he must also be *with* him, filling immensity. But the infinite God declared — "There is no God *with* me." If Jesus is equal with God, he must likewise be *like* him. But the infinite God declared — "I am God, there is none else, none *like* me." If then you place confidence in the words of the Almighty, you cannot believe there is any infinite being *equal* to the one true God; or *with* the one true God; or *like* the one true God. And when Jesus was baptized, the infinite God declared from heaven — "This is my beloved *son* in whom I am well pleased." This is conclusive evidence that Jesus is a distinct being from the infinite God; and also, that he is no *third* part, no *equal* part, of the infinite God; but truly the *son* of God. And so he is represented throughout the Old Testament; the messiah, the anointed, the redeemer, the sun of righteousness, the prince of peace, whom the infinite God would bring into existence, and qualify to be the Saviour of the world. And not in one instance is it even hinted that he should be equal to the eternal Jehovah. If then you say that Jesus is equal with God, you contradict the uniform declarations of the ancient Prophets; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. Isaiah xlv. 22. Deut. xxxii. 39. Isaiah xlvi. 9. Matt. iv. 17.

3. If you say that Jesus is equal with God, you contradict his own declarations. All his sayings, which I

have already quoted to prove that he is not God, also prove that he is not equal with God. For they prove that he is not self-existent, independent, omnipotent, infinitely wise and good, and omniscient. And if he does not possess any or all of these attributes, as he explicitly declared he did not, he cannot be equal to the eternal God. Besides these, other passages may be produced. Speaking of himself, he said — "I am the *son* of God." If he is a *son*, he must depend on a *Father* for existence; for no son can exist without a Father. And if dependent for existence, then for all things. This proves his own words literally true. "The *son* can do *nothing of himself*." Consequently he cannot be *equal* with the Father who gave him being and all his powers. It is unnecessary to multiply quotations. Passages, which declare or imply his inferiority to his Father, are found in almost every discourse he uttered. As if to put this question at rest forever, he unequivocally declared — "MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I." This declaration cannot possibly be misunderstood. It cannot possibly admit of but one meaning. It cannot possibly be explained away. If you admit its truth, you must admit that Jesus is not so great as his Father; is *not equal with God*. *All* his teachings are in perfect accordance with this sentiment; not once has he even hinted that he is equal with God. And if you say he is, you contradict his explicit, uniform declarations; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. John x. 36; viii. 42; xiv. 28.

4. If you say that Jesus is equal with God, you contradict the declarations of the apostles. On the day of pentecost, Peter proclaimed — that God "*made Jesus both Lord and Christ*." If he was *made* Lord, he could

not be *equal* to his *perfect Maker.* The same apostle, in the name of his brethren, also declared — that "God *exalted* Jesus to be a prince and a Saviour." If he was *exalted* by God, he could not be his equal; for it is impossible for any being to be *raised* higher than God; and it is absurd to suppose, that God would exalt an equal above himself, even were it possible. And if he was exalted to be a *Saviour*, he is dependent on God for his office. He is, therefore, the instrument, the delegated son, the commissioned Saviour, *by whom* the Sovereign of the universe saves our world. Paul taught his converts that Jesus was "*the first born of many brethren.*" If he was born in any sense, he cannot be equal to the Father who caused his birth. And if he has many brethren, he cannot be equal with God, unless there are many equal Gods. John asks — "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that *Jesus* is the *Christ.*" If he be Christ, he cannot be equal with God. For the words *Christ* and *Messiah* mean *anointed;* and when applied to Jesus, mean anointed with the holy spirit. And if Jesus was the Christ, was thus anointed, he cannot be equal to the God from whom he received the spirit without measure. Such are a few specimens of apostolic preaching. All their instructions are of a similar character. Not once have they said that Jesus is equal with God; but, on the contrary, they have uniformly represented him as receiving his existence, his miraculous powers, his resurrection from death, his exaltation, and his heavenly reward, from God, his Father. And if you say he was equal with God, you contradict the apostolic declarations; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. Acts ii. 36; v. 31. Romans viii. 29.

Perhaps you will tell me that some passages are found which seem to imply that Jesus is equal with God. Let us give them a fair examination.

1. In the first of Colossians, Jesus is said to be "the image of the invisible God." This passage explains itself. In the *same sentence*, he is also declared to be "*the first born of every creature.*" If, therefore, he is a "*creature,*" he can neither be God, the *Creator;* nor *equal* to the *Father* who *gave him existence* and all his powers. Col. i. 15.

2. In the first of Hebrews, Jesus is said to be "the express image of his — God's — person." This passage also explains itself. In the *same sentence*, he is also declared to be "*made* so much *better* than the *angels*, as he hath by inheritance *obtained* a more *excellent name* than they." If therefore he is the *image* of God, he cannot be the God of whom he is the image. And if he is *made better than the angels*, he cannot be equal to the omnipotent *Maker* of *himself* and all things. Heb. i. 3, 4.

3. In the epistle to the Colossians, you read this passage. "For in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What is the meaning of this sentence? It *cannot* mean that Jesus was either the eternal God or equal with his infinite Father. For it expressly declares, that the fulness of God — or Godhead dwelt really in him. What is the fulness of God? Let Paul explain his own writings. He prays to the Father, that his Ephesian converts "*might be filled with all the the fulness of God.*" Did he pray that they might become Gods; or equal with God? No. But simply that they might have an abundance of divine wisdom

and spiritual gifts. This then was the fulness which dwelt in Jesus; the spirit was given to him without measure; and dwelt in him, enabling him to work miracles, and speak as man never spake before. But how came he by this fulness? Let the apostle answer. "*For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.*" If he was dependent on his Father for all the fulness of the Godhead, he was neither God, nor equal to the giver of his spiritual treasures. This text, therefore, instead of proving Jesus to be either God, or equal with God, proves him to be a dependent being; dependent on the Father for all the miraculous powers he possessed. Col. ii. 9. Eph. iii. 19. Col. i. 19.

4. In the epistle to the Philippians, it is said that Jesus "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." This passage likewise explains itself. Let me quote the whole sentence. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;* who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and *became obedient unto death,* even the death of the cross; wherefore *God* also *hath highly exalted* him; and *given him a name* which is above every name; that *at the name of Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord,* to the *glory of God the Father.*" Now, by looking at the whole connexion, you see at once, that Paul could not possibly intend to convey the idea of Jesus being equal with God. For in the first place, he

uniformly speaks of Jesus as a being distinct from God, and wholly dependent on him. In the second place, he speaks of Jesus *humbling* himself, becoming obedient to *death*, being highly *exalted, receiving* the most lofty *name*, and of worship being offered — *not to him* but simply *in his name, solely for the glory of his God and Father.* Now you well know, that neither *God*, nor an *equal with God*, could either *humble* himself, or *die*, or be *exalted*, or *receive* a more glorious *name;* and you also know that an equal of God would be entitled to *equal worship* ; but in this place *all worship* is to be offered *in the name of Jesus* to the *glory of God the Father;* so that no religious homage is given to the SON. And in the third place, you perceive that Paul is inculcating humility upon his converts, from the example of Jesus. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Now can you believe, that when the apostle is exhorting his brethren, *to think of others more highly than themselves*, he would mention as an instance of Christ's humility, *that* HE *did not think his own Father higher than himself;* that HE *thought it nothing wrong to claim an equality with the infinite Jehovah!* A singular way indeed of promoting humility; and making Christians of the *same mind* with Christ. No. No, you will not attribute such absurdities to the pen of the inspired Paul. What then must we do? Does not the passage read, that "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God?" In our translation; it does. But you should remember that this epistle was written in the Greek language. And you may know that scholars of all parties agree that our translation of this sentence is not correct. What then is the true rendering? The

literal meaning of the Greek words is this. "*He did not think of the robbery, the being like God.*" Although created in the express image of God, he did not think of the robbery of being like God ; did not think of the robbery of claiming an equality with his Father; but humbled himself; so that God has highly exalted him, even at his right hand. This makes the apostle consistent and sensible, and even powerful. This passage, therefore, contains positive evidence that Jesus is not equal with God ; nay, that he never thought of the presumption of claiming equality with his heavenly Father. Phil. ii. 5—11.

What then must be our conclusion ? The Old Testament does not contain *one* passage in which it is either declared or implied, that the son is equal with God. On the contrary, it is its uniform testimony, that God has no equal, and also that the son is wholly dependent on him for all things. The New Testament does not furnish *one* passage, in which it is either declared, or implied that the son is equal with God. On the contrary, it contains above three hundred passages, in which it is either positively declared or clearly implied, that he is inferior to his Father. If then I am governed by reasonable evidence, I must conclude that Jesus is not equal with God. And as an honest man I dare not reject this conclusion. I dare not contradict the uniform testimony of the whole Bible. When Jesus declared in so many words — "*My Father is greater than I,*" — I *dare* not accuse him of uttering falsehood. I dare not unite with the Jews in accusing him of making himself equal with God. For I would not knowingly deny the Lord Jesus.

III. An instance of the second kind of denial is contained in the twenty second chapter of the book of Revelation. The apostle John fell down before the risen Jesus, to *offer him the religious worship which is due only to God!* by so doing he disobeyed the commands of his master; and *unintentionally* denied the Lord Jesus.

1. The circumstances were these. "God gave unto Jesus" a revelation. Jesus communicated the same to the beloved John, sometimes in person, and sometimes by messengers. John was so transported with what he saw and heard, that he *fell down to offer him religious worship.* Jesus instantly forbade him, in these words; "*See thou do it not;* for I am thy fellow *servant*, and of *thy brethren* the Prophets, and of them which *keep the sayings of this book;* worship God." The different names, by which he here distinguishes himself, are the same as he used before his crucifixion. Let me quote merely one specimen. "Behold *my servant* whom I have chosen." "Go tell *my brethren* that they go into Galilee." "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I *have kept my Father's commandments*, and abide in his love. By turning to the passage in question, you will notice that Jesus is called "*the angel.*" The word angel means messenger; and in the Revelation the name is given to Jesus, as in the first verse of the first chapter and elsewhere; to spiritual beings, as in many chapters; and to John, as in the sixteenth verse of the twenty second chapter. You can determine the person, to whom it is applied in any particular place, by examining the sense and connexion. You perceive that Jesus resumes the conversation in the sixth verse of the twenty second

chapter. For in the seventh he says, "Behold I come quickly;" in the tenth, he says, "seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book;" and in the sixteenth, he says — "I Jesus have sent mine angel," meaning John, to testify to the churches. And before this verse, he calls himself "the beginning and the end;" so that you cannot have the shadow of a doubt, that Jesus forbade John to offer him religious worship, although he is in this place, as in many others, called an angel, or God's messenger. And as this prohibition is in perfect accordance with his other commands, John's disobedience made him guilty of *unintentionally* denying the Lord Jesus. Rev. xxii. 6, 21. Matth. xi. 18; xxviii. 16. John xv. 10.

2. If you worship Jesus as God, you disobey the instruction of Moses and the Prophets. They taught by precept and example. They have recorded the commands of God. The first is this. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before *me*." You will not pretend that these words proceeded from Jesus. They came from the same Being who promised to raise up a Saviour. You will also notice that the word *me* can mean but one *person*. And you will remember that this one person said, by his servant — "Thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord is a jealous God." If then you worship Jesus as God, you disobey the first great command, and have another God besides your heavenly Father. This command was, however, literally obeyed by the ancient worthies. Look at their example. "And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel *thou* art *the God*, even *thou alone*." This prayer is not addressed to the Son; but to *one* God, in *one person*. All the commands and examples of the Old Testament are in

perfect accordance with the specimens quoted. The ancient Jews uniformly worshipped one God in one person; their modern descendents, in imitation of their example, still adhere to the plain commands of their scriptures. If therefore you worship Jesus as God, you disobey the instruction of Moses and the Prophets; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. Ex. xx. 3; xxxiv. 14. 2 Kings xix. 15.

3. If you worship Jesus as God, you disobey his own instruction. He also taught by example and precept. Many specimens of his prayers are contained in the gospels. In a season of joy, he ejaculated — "I thank thee, O *Father*, Lord of heaven and earth." When he received assistance to perform his greatest miracle he said, "*Father*, I thank thee that thou *hast heard* me. And I know that thou hearest me *always*." In an hour of agony, he prayed, "*Father*, if thou be willing remove this cup from me." In the moment of death, he exclaimed, "*Father*, into thy hand I commend my spirit." You notice that his prayers were uniformly addressed to the FATHER. Not an instance can you find, in which he prayed either to himself, or the holy spirit, or to any being but his God and Father. As he practised, so he preached. His disciples requested him to teach them to pray. "When ye pray, say *our Father* which art in heaven." He never hinted that he was himself that Father, or any part of that Father, to whom he directed them to offer their devotions. Could he either ignorantly or designedly lead them into error on this most important subject? Far from our minds be the base suspicion. Soon after, he informed the woman of Samaria, that the time had arrived, "when the *true* worshippers

shall worship the *Father* in spirit and in truth." If you worship any being but the Father, you are not the *true* worshippers; for he alone is *the only* proper object of worship. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him only* shalt thou serve." But to prevent all mistake, he explicitly forbade worship to himself. "In that day" —after my ascension —"YE SHALL ASK ME NOTHING." A more positive prohibition could not have been given. Not in one instance has he commanded any one to worship either himself, or the spirit, or any being, but his FATHER; the ONLY TRUE GOD. On this all important subject, therefore, his instructions are peculiarly plain, and explicit, and definite. And if you worship him as God, you disobey his uniform example and commands, and consequently you deny the Lord Jesus. Luke x. 21; xxii. 42; xxiii. 46; xi. 2. John iv. 23. Matt. iv. 10. John xvi. 23.

4. If you worship Jesus as God, you disobey the instructions of the Apostles. They likewise taught by example and precept. While Jesus remained on earth, they worshipped the Father only, in obedience to his instructions. Soon after his ascension, they "lifted up their voice to God with *one accord*, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made the heavens, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;" "of a truth against *thy holy child Jesus* whom *thou hast anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate were gathered together." This prayer is offered to the God whom Jesus taught them to worship; to his God and Father. Take an example from their epistles. Paul, who was caught up to the third heaven, and of course, ought to know the proper object of worship, declared, "I bow my knees to the *Father*

of our Lord Jesus Christ." Peter prayed, "Blessed be the *God* and *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ." James said, speaking of the tongue—"Therewith bless we *God*, even the *Father*." John said—"Grace be with you from *God the Father*." Jude begins his epistle with the mention of "*God the Father*." It was their uniform practice to worship the FATHER of Jesus, *and him only*, as the *supreme God*. And no instance of their worshipping Jesus as God can be found in their writings. They preached as they practised. When addressing Jews, they inculcated no new object of worship. For the Jews already worshipped the God of their Fathers; the one true God of heaven and earth. When addressing Cornelius, they gave him no command to worship Jesus, but permitted him to continue in the worship of the one impartial Father of the Universe. When addressing the learned, idolatrous Athenians, they explained to them the only proper object of religious worship. But it was not Jesus; it was the infinite Father who *had raised Jesus from the* dead, and *ordained him to be the judge of the world*. When addressing christian converts, Paul said, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all *in the name* of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks* to *God* and *the Father by him*." It is unnecessary to multiply quotations. They uniformly represented the Father—God—as the *only* proper object of religious worship. In no instance have they directed any one to worship either the Son, or the spirit, or any being but God the Father. And if you worship Jesus as God, you disobey all apostolic instruction; and consequently deny the Lord Jesus. Acts iv. 24, 27. Eph. iii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 3. James i. 3. 2 John 3. Col. iii. 17.

Perhaps you will tell me, that Jesus was worshipped while on earth. True. But not in one instance as God. In the Scriptures, the word worship has two distinct meanings; first, religious homage due only to God; and secondly, obeisance, civil respect, grateful reverence. This definition may be illustrated by a few quotations. "And all the congregation — bowed down their heads, and *worshipped* the *Lord* and the *king*." They worshipped the Lord with religious homage; and the king with civil respect. "King Nebuchadnezzar fell down upon his face and *worshipped* Daniel." Nothing more than civil obeisance. Our Saviour, in relating a parable, said —"The servant therefore fell down and *worshipped* him; not as God, with religious homage; but as a benefactor, with grateful reverence. Quotations of this kind might be largely multiplied. But sufficient have been given to illustrate the different meanings of the word worship. Now the plain fact is this. In those countries, where the holy Scriptures were written, respect and reverence were shown to superiors and benefactors by falling down and worshipping them. In the eastern nations, this custom still prevails. When any one approaches the presence of the king of China, he must fall down and *worship* him nine times. This kind of worship was frequently offered to Jesus, especially by such as were benefited by his miraculous powers. It was first done by the wise men, who brought him offerings of gold and spices. No one can be so senseless as to suppose they adored the tender infant as the infinite God! No. They paid their respects to a child, who was ordained by God to become a prince and a Saviour. When he stilled the winds and waves, his disciples wor-

shipped him. But not as God; for they said in so many words, "of a truth thou art the *Son* of God." And you well recollect, that he directed those whom he cured, to give all glory to his heavenly Father. In all the examples on record, it does not appear that religious homage was intended, even in *one* instance. Consequently, there was no occasion for his forbidding such reverence; more especially, since the praise was given to "God who had given such power" to his *Son*. But had one attempted to offer him the worship due only to God, he would have forbidden the act, as quickly as he did in the case of John; for he was exceedingly tenacious of his Father's glory. Hence you see the cause why Paul and Barnabas forbade the worship of the inhabitants of Lystra. These idolaters were proceeding to offer sacrifices to them as heathen deities. And even Cornelius was not so free from heathen notions, but Peter was obliged to say to him, "I myself also am a *man*." Although Jesus was never worshipped as God while on earth, yet he requires us to honor him as we do his Father. And this we do, when we acknowledge him as the commissioned *Son* of God; and receive his instructions as the *wisdom* of God; and obey his precepts as the *commands* of God; and *not* when we offer him the religious homage due only to his heavenly Father, in direct disobedience to his explicit injunctions. 1 Chron. xxix. 20. Dan. ii. 46. Matt. xviii. 26; xiv. 23. Acts x. 26; xiv. 14.

After the ascension of Jesus, I find no instance of his being worshipped as God. Stephen, indeed, called upon him to receive his departing spirit. But not as God. For the Scripture explicitly informs us that he saw "JESUS *standing on the right hand of* GOD;" so that he could

not possibly mistake the one standing on the right hand of God for God himself. And accordingly he called upon Jesus — not God* — as his risen Lord. All this was proper. For a special miracle was wrought to confirm the faith and constancy of this first christian martyr. And when the opening heavens disclosed to his failing sight his ascended Saviour, how natural for him to breathe his soul into his hands. Should a similar miracle be wrought at the hour of our dissolution, it would be proper and natural for us to imitate this example; but under no other circumstances. For we are required to imitate the example of Jesus, who said — "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit; but no where is the example of Stephen recommended to our imitation. In this passage, therefore, Jesus was not worshipped as God; and no encouragement is given for any one to call upon him, except in case of a similar miracle. In Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, this phrase occurs. "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." Our translation of this sentence is incorrect. A learned trinitarian commentator translates the phrase — all that "are *called by the name of Christ;*" meaning *christians* This is doubtless the correct rendering. In the book of Revelation, frequent ascriptions are made to the "Lamb that was *slain.*" But no one can mistake the "Lamb that was slain," for the undying "*God who sitteth on the throne.*" No one will be so wicked as to say the infinite Jehovah was killed by his own creatures. No one in christian lands can be so senseless as to worship for *God* a being who was *crucified* and *slain* by wicked

*You will notice that the word *God* was put into our Bible by the *translators;* it is in *Italics.*

hands. But all Christians can heartily unite in grateful and reverential ascriptions to *Jesus* "*who has redeemed us to God by his blood.*" Not a passage, therefore, can I find, in which worship was offered to Jesus as God after his ascension. His uniform example and precepts must therefore forever remain the unerring rule of christian worship. The *Father* will receive the homage of *true* worshippers. Acts vii. 56, 59. 1 Cor. i. 1, 2. Rev. v. 9, 13.

What then must be our conclusion? The Old Testament does not contain one command to offer religious homage to Jesus; nor an example in which he was worshipped as God. On the contrary, we are instructed, by precept and example, to offer all prayers to the one true God, the Father of Jesus. The New Testament does not once direct us to offer religious homage to Jesus; and does not furnish one example in which he was worshipped as God; but contains explicit prohibitions of the act. On the contrary, it contains ninety passages in which we are directed to offer all prayers to God the Father. I must therefore conclude that Jesus is not to be worshipped as God. But when I consider how much he has done and suffered for the salvation of the world; when I remember his compassionate conduct, and lovely character, and heavenly spirit; when I feel my infinite obligations to him for light, and truth, and hope, and heaven, I am ready to offer him the grateful devotions of my soul. But his words immediately rise in my mind. He that *keepeth my commandments*, he it is that *loveth* me. And then I *dare* not — I *dare* not disobey the uniform instruction of the whole Bible. When he commands, in so many words, "*ye shall ask me nothing*," I

dare not say, I will ask him for anything. For I fear the voice of conscience would loudly proclaim —" *See thou do it not*; WORSHIP GOD." And I would not knowingly deny the Lord Jesus.

My Friends, — my discussion is finished. I have noticed three examples of the denial of the Lord Jesus; and from them, I have attempted to prove three things; first, that Jesus is not God; second, that he is not equal with God; and third, that he is not to be worshipped as God. My conclusions appear to be fairly, and fully, and firmly established.

Now is there any possible way in which you can overthrow these conclusions? You will attempt the work in but one manner. You *can* say that Jesus is possessed of two distinct natures; that he is "very God" and "very man;" that all my arguments refer to his human nature; and in that sense are perfectly sound; but that he also possesses a nature truly divine; and is in truth directly the opposite of all that has been proved. This you *can* say, and *may* say, if you please. But this has not been said, either by Jesus himself, or by his Apostles, or by any sacred writer. Not a word, not even a hint, can you find in the whole Bible, which intimates that Jesus possessed two distinct natures. Your saying, therefore, has no foundation in revelation; it is mere human assertion.

But how would you attempt to prove the truth of this assertion? You would first prove, as I have done, that Jesus is a created dependent being. Then you would *say*, his names, and attributes, and offices, and works, and words prove him to be "very God." Now apply this mode of reasoning to the ancient Prophets, and the inspired Apostles. They also received exalted titles,

and were placed in high offices, and wrought stupendous miracles, and uttered lofty language. Some of them were called Gods. Some of them controlled the rain, and wind, the river and sea, the moon and sun, life and death. Some of them foretold future events, and imparted their prophetic spirit. Some of them are to judge the world and even angels. Some of them began their discourse with these magnificent phrases. "Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth." And none of them were more careful than Jesus, to attribute all their powers, and privileges, and honors to God. Why then do you not affirm that these persons were *very Gods*, as well as *very men?* Why do you not invest them with two distinct natures? You have precisely the same *kind* of evidence, and not *greatly inferior in degree*, to prove *them truly divine*, as you have to prove Jesus truly divine. You must do it, to be consistent in your reasoning; or you must admit that he had but one nature. You have your choice.

But this is not all. Admit that Jesus is possessed of two natures; and what does the admission prove? *It proves that Jesus was a deceiver!* Yes. I repeat it. This admission proves that Jesus was a deceiver; as I will show to your satisfaction. His disciples asked him a fair question. They wished to know the precise time when Jerusalem should be destroyed. He gave them an apparently honest answer. "Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no *man*, no not the *angels* which are in heaven, neither the SON, but the FATHER." You do not pretend that the son is the Father. Now the son either did know the day and hour when this event would take place, or he did not know. If he was very God, he did

know; for God must know all things. And if he did know, he uttered a deliberate falsehood, and intentionally deceived his disciples; for he unequivocally and solemnly declared that this exact time was known to no being but the Father; was *not known to the* SON; when it must have been, had he possessed a nature *truly divine.* And if he deceived them, in this instance, where is your evidence that he did not deceive them in every instance? You have none. You can place no dependence on his declarations. Such is the *natural*, the *necessary*, the *inevitable* consequence of investing the SON with two natures. For my own part, if I cannot believe every word Jesus uttered, he is no Saviour for me. Thank God, I can. I believe he had but one nature. And believing this, I receive his instructions as *true* — as DIVINE. Yes. When he declared to his disciples — "ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE HEARD OF MY FATHER, I HAVE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU." — I believe he uttered the *truth*, the WHOLE TRUTH, and NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

My Friends, — The question is now put to your consciences. On this infinitely important subject, are you disposed to receive the plain, current, unembarrassed doctrine of revelation? Are you willing to believe that "there is but one God the Father;" that "the Father *sent* the son to be the Saviour of the world;" and that the "true worshippers shall worship the Father;" Will you make the holy scriptures the standard of your faith, and the rule of your conduct? And will you study them in connexion, and compare passage with passage, and exercise your common sense in their interpretation, so as to obtain their true meaning? Or will you form a system of belief, from detached verses, and obscure expres-

sions, and human inferences, and party explanations? You have your choice.

But remember, my friends, you are accountable for your opinions and conduct. And also remember, that you are to be judged by a plain rule now in your possession. Hear the solemn declaration of Jesus. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my *words*, hath *one* that judgeth him; the *word* that I have spoken, the *same* shall judge him in the last day." Yes. You are to be judged by the very words Jesus has spoken, and which are recorded in the gospels. And when placed before his judgment seat, should you be charged with accusing him of *making himself God*, what would be your answer? Could you produce one passage in which he declared himself to be God? Did he not take all possible pains to represent himself as *wholly dependent* on God? Did he not say in so many words, that his Father was "THE ONLY TRUE GOD?" And should you be charged with accusing him of *making himself equal with God*, what would be your answer? Could you produce one passage in which he declared himself to be equal with God? Could you not produce hundreds, in which he declared his inferiority to his Father? Did he not say in so many words — "MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I!" And should you be charged with worshipping him as God, what would be your answer? Could you produce one passage in which he commanded any one to worship him as God? Did he not uniformly represent his Father as the only proper object of religious worship? Did he not say in so many words — "YE SHALL ASK ME NOTHING?" At that solemn tribunal, it will be of no avail to say, that you were thus taught by your parents, your instructers,

your creeds, your ministers. To none of these, to no man, to no body of men, are you accountable for your religious sentiments. To God alone are you answerable. He has given a revelation for you to study, and understand. By this, will sentence be pronounced. If your guilt be *unintentional*, pardon will be granted; but if caused by *neglect* or *wilfulness*, deplorable must be your condition. Remember this. And also remember the words of Jesus. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of *my words*, of *him* also shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father." John viii. 50. Mark viii. 38.

1st Series. No. 119.

THE

TWELFTH REPORT

OF THE AMERICAN

UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE ANNUAL MEETING,

MAY 30, 1837.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.
JUNE, 1837.

Price 6 cents.

Tuttle, Dennett & Chisholm....Power Press....17 School St....Boston.

TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY.

THE American Unitarian Association celebrated its twelfth anniversary on Tuesday evening, May 30, 1837. The members met for the transaction of business, at half past six o'clock, in the Berry street Vestry, the Hon. WILLIAM SULLIVAN, one of the Vice Presidents, in the chair.

The records of the last annual meeting were read.

The Treasurer then presented the following Statement of Receipts and Expenditures, which was accepted.

To the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association.

GENTLEMEN, — The twelfth annual account of the Treasurer of the Association is now submitted to you with the usual statement of the Receipts and Expenditures for the past year; balance in the Treasury, $3011 66.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
From May 24, 1836, to May 30, 1837.

RECEIPTS.

Balance in the Treasury, May 24, 1836,		$2344 57
From Annual Subscribers, - -	6 00	
" Life Members, - -	560 00	
" Auxiliary Societies, -	1802 63	
" Donations, - - - -	71 00	
" Sales of Tracts, - - -	192 39	
" Individuals in Rev. Mr Bigelow's Society, Taunton, in aid of Missions to the West,	75 00	
" the Treasurer, interest, -	142 49	
		2849 51
		$5194 08

EXPENDITURES.

Paid for printing and binding Tracts,		$1086 72	
" for paper for do. -		180 00	
" Rev. Noah Worcester, D.D. for Tract,		25 00	
" Rent of room for General Secretary,		150 00	
" Sundry Incidental Expenses, -		50 70	
" Rev. George W. Hosmer for Missionary services in Southern and Western States,	$20 00		
" Mr Charles A. Farley,	100 00		
" Rev. William Farmer,	50 00		
" Mr C. D. Cranch, - -	50 00		
" Mr James Thurston, -	50 00		
" Mr Frederick W. Holland,	150 00		
" for supplying Rev. J. F. Clark's pulpit at Louisville, during his absence as Missionary, - -	20 00		
" Unitarian Society in Brookfield, - - -	100 00		
" 2nd Parish in Saco, Maine,	50 00		
" Rev. J. F. Clark for 33 copies of Western Messenger,	100 00	—690 00	
			2182 42
Balance,			$3011 66

My account of the Fund for the support of the General Secretary of the Association, is likewise presented to you ; and I regret that the collections from Subscribers, for the past year, have been insufficient to meet the general expenses of that office. This fund was raised as you well know, by donations and subscriptions. Many of the subscriptions were payable annually for a term of years, but the severe pressure for money which has existed for a long time past, has been felt by the subscribers to this fund ; and many of those who were in affluent circumstances at the time of subscribing, are now reduced and unable to pay ; and some from the reverses they have met with, (if not positively unable to pay) feel the necessity of retrenching their expenses and declined paying. To these causes may be attributed the diminished receipts for the past year ; and I respectfully suggest for your consideration the expediency of adopting some measures for increasing this Fund. The balance of the Funds is now $9,907 19.

I am, gentlemen,

Very respectfully,

Your ob't servant,

HENRY RICE.

Boston, May 30, 1837.

BOSTON, JANUARY 21, 1837. The subscribers have examined the above account, and found it correct and properly vouched.

Signed, THOMAS TARBELL, HENRY B. TOWNSEND, } *Auditors.*

It was stated to the meeting that the Rev. Dr Channing declined accepting the office of President.

A letter of resignation from the Hon. Judge Story, one

of the Vice Presidents, was read. The resignations of the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., D. D., one of the Executive Committee, and of the Rev. Samuel Barrett, the Assistant Secretary, were communicated. Whereupon thanks were voted to each of those gentlemen for their very useful and highly acceptable services.

The following officers for the ensuing year were then chosen :—

OFFICERS

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

1837—38.

PRESIDENT.

Rev. Ichabod Nichols, D. D., Me.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon. Joseph Lyman, Mass.
" William Sullivan, "
" Charles H. Atherton, N. H.
" Stephen Longfellow, Me.
Henry Wheaton, Esq., N. Y.
James Taylor, Esq., Penn.
Henry Payson, Esq., Md.
Hon. William Cranch, D. C.
Martin L. Hurlburt, Esq., Penn.
Hon. Samuel S. Wilde, Mass.
" Samuel Hoar, Jr. "
Timothy Flint, Esq., La.
Hon. Lemuel H. Arnold, R. I.
Benjamin Bakewell, Esq., Penn.
H. J. Huidekoper, Esq., Penn.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Rev. SAMUEL BARRETT, } *Directors.*
" GEORGE RIPLEY, }
" CHANDLER ROBBINS, }
Rev. CHARLES BRIGGS, *General Secretary.*
" SAMUEL K. LOTHROP, *Assistant Secretary.*
" HENRY RICE, Esq., *Treasurer.*

At an adjourned meeting of the Association, held in the Berry Street Vestry on Thursday, the 1st of June, an amendment of the Constitution, proposed at the last annual meeting, came up for discussion; and being fully explained by Judge Rogers, was, with a few slight modifications, adopted, and made part of the Constitution, as the Tenth article thereof.

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee, in presenting their Twelfth Annual Report, cannot but congratulate the members and friends of the Association on the success which has attended their labors during the past year. By the blessing of a kind Providence their means of usefulness have been enlarged, and the good they have been able to accomplish has surpassed their most sanguine expectations. We have become more extensively acquainted with the spiritual wants of the country; have explored new fields in the vineyard of our Lord; extended our sympathy to distant communities of our faith; and sent the light of religious instruction and the means of grace to many who were sitting in comparative darkness, and in a great measure denied the blessings of the Gospel.

For such means and opportunities of promoting the highest good of our fellow beings, it becomes us to render due thanks to the Father of mercies, who has thus enabled us to extend the empire of truth and righteousness. The Association has recently gained many friends and supporters: and an increased interest in its objects and operations is manifested throughout our denomination. It is seen that we are laboring in the best and holiest of causes; that our great object is, not to pro-

mote the interests of a sect or party, but to multiply the means of religion; — to check the progress of infidelity, irreligion and sin, and build up the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men. And we rejoice and bless God, that so many are disposed to sympathize with us; to give us their countenance and their prayers;—to strengthen our hands and encourage our hearts in the great work before us.

It has been an object with the Association to consult in every possible way the welfare of all our churches;—to aid in procuring suitable preachers for destitute societies; and to afford temporary assistance to such as are unable for the present to support the institutions of religion, but which give promise of growth and strength. There is many a society thus situated;—struggling hard against opposition, prejudice, and persecution; and making more than ordinary sacrifices to maintain public worship, and uphold the ark of God. We have often felt deeply for such; particularly those at a distance, whose trials and privations are peculiarly severe, and call loudly for the sympathy and aid of our more favored churches. We have as yet afforded assistance to comparatively few of them; but we sincerely hope, that ere long we shall be able to supply the wants of all; and thus cause the hearts of many to rejoice, and be instrumental in training them up for the kingdom of our Father.

The Committee have given a good degree of attention to the Tract Department. The Tracts have been issued monthly; amounting, during the year, to about 60,000 copies. The most of them were taken by the Auxiliary Associations, life-members, and annual subscribers; but a larger number than usual have been circulated; appli-

cations having been made for them from almost every part of the United States. They have been a source of comfort, instruction, and improvement to those in distant places who entertain our views, but who seldom have an opportunity and the satisfaction of hearing our preachers. "Send us some of your good preachers, said a gentleman in Tennessee to the Secretary; we prefer to hear the living voice; but if you cannot, send us some of those silent yet eloquent preachers, the Tracts of your Association. They will be a comfort to us and our families. They are full of good, rational instruction, and speak more effectually to the heart than ninetenths of the preachers we hear."

These publications have done much towards making our views more known, and consequently removing the strong prejudices which almost every where exist against us. And they have done much to promote the cause of pure religion and practical holiness. A large part of them have been of a practical character, enforcing the great duties of Christianity; but as doctrinal Tracts are needed in many parts of the country, we have occasionally issued them; and shall continue to, till our doctrines are better understood and less misrepresented than they now are.

A correspondent at Cincinnati, Ohio, writes us that "Tracts explaining our views, ought to be circulated more widely in the West than they have ever yet been." "That this may be done," he says, "there should be some central place of deposit, where they may be procured, or whence they may be sent for gratuitous distribution, to our friends in different parts of the Mississippi Valley. We have need of Tracts on the *doctrines* of

Christianity, setting forth *wherein* we dissent, and *why* we dissent from our brethren of other denominations of Christians. We are often asked by those who are dissatisfied with the prevailing creeds, and who are seeking for light and knowledge, for works through which they may become acquainted with our views. Such works would be read, and they would be widely useful. They go where the living preacher cannot go. They hold communion with men's minds where religious truth is best studied—in the silence and retirement of their homes. By removing errors, they remove one of the most fruitful sources of doubt—of a kind of doubt and distrust of the truth of Christianity, which paralyzes its power."

That our Western societies might be better supplied with the Tracts than formerly, the Secretary established a Depository at Cincinnati. A supply of them will soon be forwarded there, whence they can readily be sent to every part of the West.

The Book and Pamphlet Society has received a larger number of our publications than in any previous year. This society has always acted in concert with the Association; and it affords us pleasure to witness its growth and prosperity. It has become extensively useful, and is doing incalculable good. From the Report of its Secretary, it appears that "the number of Books and Pamphlets taken from the Depository, the past year, is 14,600, including Bibles and Testaments." They have been called for "from every State in the Union." "Some have also been sent to Havana, some to the Province of New Brunswick, and one parcel to the Sandwich Islands, in which places, it is believed, our views of divine truth are beginning to be known and appreciated."

The ministry to the poor in this city, though not now connected with the Association, is still an object of great interest with the Committee. Another chapel has been erected for its use; its friends have increased, and its truly philanthropic and Christian influences have been more widely extended. We rejoice in its success, and in the success of a similar ministry in the city of New York. And we are desirous of engaging in the same good work in some of the cities of the West. We have made an appropriation in aid of the support of one missionary to the poor in Louisville, Kentucky; and should be glad, would our funds permit, to aid in the support of another in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We attach the utmost importance to this work. And in prosecuting it, we hope to have the assistance of those whom Providence has blessed with the means of supplying the temporal and moral wants of their brethren.

Four months of the year were devoted by the General Secretary to the duties of the office, the Tract department, the correspondence, delivering addresses, and forming Auxiliary Associations in different parts of New England. The foreign correspondence has been mostly with the Secretaries of the "British and Foreign Unitarian Association," and the "Western Unitarian Society," in England; with one of the clergy of Geneva, and with our much esteemed friend, the Rev. Ezra Stiles Gannett, at London and Paris. We hope in future to have more frequent intercourse with those Associations. We have exchanged publications with them; and sent copies of all our Tracts to Geneva, where our views appear to be gaining ground, as they do likewise in England and in France.

We are happy to hear of "the continued and successful exertions of William Roberts, at Madras, in making known pure Christianity among the Heathen, by preaching, printing, and school instruction;" and that Joseph Roberts, his son, who has just finished his education in England, is about "to assist him in his missionary labors with better helps for carrying on the good work." The accounts we have received of the state of religion in Transylvania are highly encouraging. "The Transylvanian Unitarians, it is stated, are increasing in numbers; additions are made to their churches; and their colleges and schools are prospering."

Regarding Auxiliary Associations as a powerful means of promoting Christian knowledge and piety, as well as a source of encouragement and strength in our missionary efforts, we are desirous of seeing them multiplied, and established in all our societies.

The number of Auxiliaries formed, the past year, is eleven. The number added to the list of life members is twentyfour; making in all two hundred and seventyfour. Of these, eightyfive are clergymen, and were, with few exceptions, made life members by the ladies of their respective societies.

Several generous subscriptions and donations have been made to the funds of the Association. A gentleman of this city made us a donation of five hundred dollars. An individual in Buffalo, New York, subscribed two hundred and fifty dollars, to be expended in Tracts for that place. An individual in Springfield made a donation of fifty dollars. And a gentleman in Mobile, Alabama, subscribed one hundred dollars a year for ten years. Besides these, many have subscribed smaller

sums. And societies in different parts of the country have contributed liberally to our funds.

Our missionary operations have been much more extensive the past year than in any previous year. Still, we see many a scattered flock without a shepherd;—many a community destitute of religious instruction; and often have to lament that we cannot send laborers into fields which are ripe for the harvest.

We have employed, for longer or shorter periods, seven missionaries. But this number seems small in comparison with the numerous places where our preachers are wanted. With the facts we have before us respecting the spiritual wants of the country, which it belongs to us to supply, we feel convinced that instead of seven missionaries, seven times seven, (we had almost said seventy times seven,) might be usefully employed in the different States, and might before long build up societies; and that, too, without interfering with other denominations; and thus do great service to the cause of Christianity.

Our missionaries preached in New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and most of the Western States. They were cordially received wherever they went, and their labors have been blessed. New societies have been formed under their preaching, and a new interest has been awakened on the subject of religion.

The Secretary was absent eight months of the year, travelling in the Western and South Western States. His object was to visit the societies of our denomination;—to learn the religious wants of the people, and collect such facts as would be useful to the Association in its future operations. And the information which he brings us respecting the prosperity of our distant churches, and

the success of rational views of religion is highly gratifying. It seems that a large portion of the more intelligent and influential people in those States are far from being disposed to embrace the prevailing doctrines of religion. They dislike them extremely; and say if such doctrines are Christianity, they can have nothing to do with it. They must indeed have a more rational religion, or they will ere long have no religion. And it gives us pleasure to learn that they readily become interested in our views, and are disposed to embrace religion in the form in which we present it. We see in this much to encourage us, and stimulate to greater exertions. For it opens before us a broad field for usefulness; a field, too, in which no denomination can labor so successfully as ours.

In the State of New York the Secretary found many of our faith; particularly in the cities and larger towns, to whom he preached as he had opportunity. Among the places where there is a call for our preachers, and where with a little effort societies might soon be gathered, are Albany, Troy, Syracuse, Oswego, and Ogdensburg. There are Unitarians also in Utica, Geneva, Rome, Rochester, and many other towns, where our doctrines would be heard gladly, and where it is desirable they should be preached.

The Rev. Mr. Hosmer is laboring very successfully at Buffalo. His society, though not large, is strong; and is increasing. He is well adapted to that important station; and will doubtless be extensively useful.

There are several places along the shores of Lake Erie, where it is important we should send preachers; particularly at Erie, Cleveland, Toledo and Detroit. Toledo, which is destined to be a large place, contains

about two thousand inhabitants, and has no organized religious society of any kind. And some of the leading people in the place, feeling the want of religious institutions, are making exertions to build a church, and establish a society.

The Rev. Mr Day's society at Meadville, Pennsylvania, is in a prosperous condition. It has recently erected a beautiful church, and may now be regarded as among our permanent societies. Much praise is due to a distinguished individual of that society for his uncommon efforts and untiring labors in the cause of truth and righteousness. We should be glad, were it in our power, to send missionaries to several places in that State; to Harrisburg, the seat of government, where there is a Unitarian church, in which the voice of the preacher is seldom heard—to Northumberland, and several places in the vicinity. The Rev. Mr Kay used to preach there. But since he left, the services, with the exception of a few week's preaching by one of our missionaries, have been conducted by laymen.

The society at Pittsburg is small, but deserves encouragement and aid. That is the great opening into the broad West; and it is a very important station. We feel grateful to a zealous and benevolent individual of the place for his labors and sacrifices in establishing a society, and erecting a house of worship at his own expense; which we hope he will soon have the satisfaction of seeing crowded with sincere and devout worshippers.

Besides the places referred to in Ohio, there are Unitarians in Marietta, Zanesville, Oxford, New Richmond, Franklin Mills, Columbus, Dayton, and many other towns. At Franklin Mills, funds have been raised for

the support of public worship, and application has been made to us for a preacher. At Dayton, the Rev. Mr Peabody, of Cincinnati, preached during the past summer; and found many who were interested in our views, and who would be pleased to have a preacher of our faith there permanently.

The Secretary visited and preached in most of the important places on the Ohio River. The societies at Cincinnati and Louisville, he found in a flourishing condition. They had, indeed, for some time to encounter severe persecution, and struggle against a variety of difficulties; but they are now firmly established, and may be regarded as the strongest of our societies in the West. The Rev. Mr Clarke, of the latter place, is laboring hard, but successfully. He preaches to his people sound doctrine, and he preaches to the heart. And through the Western Messenger (a periodical deservedly popular wherever it is known) he preaches needful and wholesome truths throughout the great Valley of the Mississippi.

There are a number of places in Kentucky and Indiana, where our missionaries might labor with a good prospect of success; but there is at this time a much louder call for them in Illinois.

The Secretary travelled over a large part of that State; and found more or less wherever he went who sympathize with us. He discovered a general disposition among the people to hear our doctrines preached; and perceived that nothing was wanting, but the right kind of preachers, to gather numerous societies. Several have been formed within a few months; and others will soon be formed.

At Chicago, a large and flourishing place on Lake

Michigan, a society has been organized, a lot procured for a church, and provision made for the support of public worship.

At Alton, a rapidly growing town on the Mississippi, near the mouth of the Missouri, we have a society which promises well. Mr Charles Farley has been preaching there for some time with great acceptance. When the Secretary was there he was preaching in the Methodist church to large audiences, and doing much towards building up and establishing a good society.

At Peoria, a town beautifully situated on the Illinois river, a society has been formed under very favorable auspices. The Rev. Mr Huntoon preached there during the winter with great success. He preached to large audiences, interested many in religion who before were indifferent to the subject, and so strengthened our cause that the society, we should think, may be considered as firmly established.

Among other places in that State where there are those of our denomination, are Galena, Atlas, Pittsfield, Juliet, Pekin, Tremont, Jacksonville, and Hillsboro.

We cannot but be interested in the people of those newly risen towns, many of whom were from the New England States, and feel sensibly the want of the religious privileges they once enjoyed. As the traveller approaches one of these villages, for instance the pleasant village of Tremont, he is utterly astonished at its rapid growth, and cannot persuade himself that it is scarcely two years since the place where it stands was a wild and pathless prairie. He soon, however, perceives from the taste and neatness of the buildings, and the general air of comfort and convenience about them, that the enterprising sons

of the Pilgrims are there; and sees them, like their fathers of old, laboring to establish in the infant colony schools and churches. Tremont is emphatically a New England village.

Mr Thurston preached there the past winter, and aided in forming a society. His services were highly acceptable;—were, indeed, a source of great comfort to those who have left their homes in the far East, and with their homes their churches. They have the prospect of a good society; and are now making great exertions to build a church.

Mr Thurston preached occasionally, too, at Pekin. Three societies in Massachusetts, in the towns of Plymouth, Kingston, and Duxbury, have united in raising funds for the support of a missionary in Illinois. They have procured a preacher well qualified for such a service, Mr Huntington, and he is now gone out to enter upon that important field of labor. At the suggestion of the Secretary, who preached there and awakened an interest, he will make Hillsboro his head quarters, (that village being settled in part by people from the "Old Colony," and being a central position,) and preach occasionally in the neighboring villages,—in Jacksonville, Springfield, Shelbyville, Vandalia, Greenville and Edwardsville. It is gratifying to learn that many in that part of the country have attached themselves to our societies, who were not, and probably never would have been, interested in the prevailing views of religion around them.

The Secretary preached, as he had opportunity, in different parts of the State; and wherever he went, he could not but feel a deep sympathy for the people, and

was more and more convinced of the duty of christians here to afford temporary aid to those rising communities —to send them preachers—the light of divine truth, the consolations and hopes of the religion of Jesus.

He visited St. Louis, Mo., and preached to the Rev. Mr Eliot's society. That society is not large, but is composed of very good material; and when its new church is dedicated, it will doubtless increase rapidly. Mr Eliot is, indeed, doing a good work there. His influence is of the best kind; and it is exerted and felt not only in that city, but in the neighboring States.

In the South Western States the Secretary found a large and highly important field for missionary labors. Many of the people there are sadly indifferent to the subject of religion, and need to be awakened. Many, too, feel the want of religious institutions, are seeking to know the truth, and hungering and thirsting for the bread and waters of life.

Among the places in those States where it is desirable we should send preachers, are Memphis and Nashville, Tenn., Natchez, Vicksburg, Grand Gulf, and Port Gibson, Mi., New Orleans and Alexandria, La., and Mobile, and Montgomery, Ala. The Secretary visited the most of those places; and found many who entertain our views, and a general disposition among the people to hear them preached and explained.

He preached several times at Nashville; and from the number there interested in our doctrines, he considers it a good opening for a society. There is a good opening, too, he thinks, at Alexandria, on Red river. He spent some time at Mobile, where we have a new, but very interesting society. It was gathered the winter previous

under the preaching of the Rev. Mr Clarke and the Rev. Mr Hosmer. A commodious and beautiful church has been built, in which the Rev. Ephraim Peabody is now preaching. The number of those, who have manifested an interest in our views there, has been constantly increasing; and the prospect is that the society will be a strong and useful one.

At New Orleans there is a large society of christians not designated by any particular name, who, together with their eloquent and estimable pastor, the Rev. Mr Clapp, sympathize deeply with us, and are substantially of our faith. The Secretary and the Rev. Mr Eliot of St. Louis preached in his church; and ascertained from him, and by a general inquiry among the people, that it is very desirable another church should be erected there. Mr Clapp's church is full. And they ascertained that there are enough Unitarians in the city, connected with no society, and having no regular place of worship, to fill another church. It appeared to them far more important to establish a society there than in any place in the whole country. And before they left they had the satisfaction of seeing a subscription commenced for a church. A lot has since been engaged; and sums to a large amount have been promised; and nothing but the peculiar pressure of the times prevents its speedy erection.

A correspondent of the Secretary writes thus from New Orleans. "Do not fear that our zeal will flag and die. Liberal Christianity is dear to this people; and becoming more so every year. No other form of religion will do for the inhabitants of the great Valley. Don't forget us. Tell our friends in Boston that a sufficient number of churches in this city would secure the prevalence of

sound religion from the Alleghany to the Rocky mountains, from the Gulf of Mexico to the great Lakes. Let me hear from you often. All that can reasonably be expected of us will be done for the good cause."

Respecting the want of preachers in the West, a correspondent from Missouri, writes thus: "There is hardly a town, large or small, of which I know any thing, in this Western country, where a Unitarian minister might not make a good opening. If the Western people—a large portion of them at least—ever become a church-going and religious people, it must be as Unitarians, and they are even now more ready to embrace our doctrines and uphold our churches than any other. Symptoms of this state of feeling can every where be seen: the Orthodox are not satisfied with orthodoxy; the skeptical have no disposition to return to those doctrines whose inconsistencies first made them skeptics. Do not infer that the work of Unitarians is already done and that they have only to enter quietly upon their inheritance. They have to remove a great deal of blind prejudice, and, in the second place, to persuade men that religion is not necessarily irrational, before they can effect much good. This will give them work enough for many years to come. Their task is not an easy one, but they are not the less bound to do it. What they are called upon to do can be accomplished by no other sect. A better theology is required by this Western world than that which satisfied the last generation, and if it does not come from Unitarianism, I do not know to what quarter we are to look for it."

The Committee, from a wide survey of the religious condition of the West, perceive that there is a great

want of preachers for that part of the country; that, in comparison with the harvest, the laborers are few. We hope that means will be taken to bring more young men of piety and talents into the ministry. Scarcely enough are now educated in New England to supply the New England churches. How, then, are the churches and waste places of the West, that world beyond the mountains, to be supplied with preachers? It is the universa opinion of our brethren there that a Theological Institution should be established in the West to educate preachers for the West. In this opinion we concur. We believe that such an institution would do incalculable good, and we hope ere long to see it in operation.

We coincide, too, with our Western brethren in the opinion that it is very desirable to have an agent in the West, to perform missionary duty, and aid by preaching and otherwise, the settled clergymen, whose situations are peculiar and trying, and whose labors are quite too severe to be lasting. In the support of such an agency we shall be glad to aid to the extent of our means.

The Valley of the Mississippi, which, at no distant period, will contain many millions of souls, and give laws to the whole country, is, indeed, a rich and glorious field for our labors. Let us not hesitate to enter upon it. Let us do all that we can to establish there Christian institutions. Sympathy with those of our faith; the loud call of many who seldom hear the sound of the gospel, and never in accordance with their views and feelings; the moral condition of the people as affecting the character and happiness of our friends, perhaps our brothers or sons, who have gone there; the desire of doing good, of imparting to our fellow men spiritual blessings; and a

disposition to do our part in common with christians of other denominations in evangelizing the whole country—these and many other considerations urge us to sow now in that Valley, ere it be darkened by infidelity and sin, the good seed of divine truth—to delay, not even for a season, to send many more faithful laborers into that vineyard of our Lord; and thus be instrumental in the hands of God in blessing his children, in providing the means of grace and salvation not only for those of the present generation, but for the millions of immortal beings who will come after them; who in a certain sense have claims upon us; and who, could they speak to us from the distant future, would utter language of heart-felt entreaty, and of solemn warning.

The Rev. A. D. Jones arose and addressed the meeting as follows:

Mr President,—It becomes my pleasing duty to move the acceptance of the Report to which we have all been delighted listeners. The cheering information therein embodied of the progress of liberal views of Christianity in our land, is well calculated to make glad the city of our God. If any doubts have been cherished in the minds of any, hitherto, with respect to the utility and efficacy of the Agency, which this Association has in wisdom ordained and successfully sustained, it seems to me, sir, they must this evening have vanished into thin air. I am more and more convinced of the importance of this appointment, and devoutly believe that it will hereafter be looked on as one of the most truly Christian

measures that Unitarians have ever adopted. It cannot but accomplish great and lasting good. At home and abroad, among the green hills of our loved New England, and the savannahs of the West and South, already has a blessed influence gone forth out of this simply ordained and faithfully executed agency.

As I have wandered, in spirit, with our devoted Secretary, through these fertile regions of the West, now mingling in the busy throng of her crowded cities, and now resting in her pleasant villages — now scouring her immense sea-lands and now floating down the great artery of the western world, and feeling the favorable pulses of her great heart-city ; — I seem to catch a prophet's inspiration, and behold, even now, the tender blade sprung up from that faith-strewed seed, which is destined to grow up into the ripe and generous grain in the ear, which is to feed the unborn millions of that growing world, and who, though we shall have long slumbered on our earthly pillows, will then rise up and call us blessed, that in these early times, we forgot not to provide for their moral and spiritual necessities.

The news from that far and fresh land is truly animating, and we this evening, sir, feel the happy reaction of our own exertions. How soon after it was cast abroad upon the waters has this bread of life returned unto us?

I bless God for the auspices of this day of our solemn and joyful festival. We plant a landmark to day, sir, far in advance of the one we last year reared, and we have occasion to felicitate ourselves upon the glorious prospects which open before us. Praise be to Him who hath accomplished the work — joy to ourselves that we were the happy, though humble instruments.

Sir, it is a glorious work our hands and hearts find to do. Onward and upward is our course — difficult, arduous, thorny it may be, but certain, safe, heavenward. Aloft floats our banner inscribed to "*Liberty*, *Holiness*, *Love*," soon, I trust, to be the world's rallying point, as it is now its admiration and delight. Motto worthy our cause and the hearts that are engaged in it. Let us bring here, then, sir, our offering of gratitude and joy; and here let us pledge ourselves anew to duty, to each other, and to Christ. Again I say, God bless and succeed the auspices of this glad day, until from every valley and mountain-top of our land — and the world — the name of Jesus shall be heard and uttered in peace, in triumph, and in holy joy.

Again I move you, sir, the acceptance of the Report.

The Rev. Mr Bulfinch, of Augusta, (Geo.), seconded the motion for the acceptance of the Report. He observed that the Association had cause for gratitude to God, that it was now fully engaged in the Missionary cause. The time had been, when that cause was viewed with suspicion by Unitarians; aud there were probably still many who regarded such efforts as are now in progress, with no friendly feelings. In some minds, the opposition to missionary operations must be viewed as resulting from mere prejudice; but there were others by whom reasons were brought forward against it, deserving of respectful attention and reply. The chief objection of such was founded on the supposed sectarian character of missionary efforts. There are some who conceive that the missionary goes forth in the spirit of those rebuked by our Saviour,— those who "compassed sea and

land to make one proselyte; — and when he was made, he was more the child of hell than themselves." Such an objection implies a mistake in relation to the motives and the efforts of our missionaries. They go forth, not as sectarians, with a narrow-minded view to extend the influence of their own denomination. They go forth as Christian ministers, to co-operate with their brethren of other sentiments, in the same great cause, the salvation of souls. They go, not to pull down, but to build up;— not to destroy, but to act in concert with others, and with their Heavenly Father himself in creating the human spirit anew in the image of its Maker. Instead of wishing that other denominations should decrease, with a spirit of sectarian rivalry, the Unitarian missionary, worthy of the name, would rejoice to see their efforts crowned with success, and more and more souls brought to God and to Christ by their efforts. And those of other sentiments were often, he believed, liberal enough to share the same sentiment, and wish their Unitarian brethren "God Speed" in their work. One instance of this kind had occurred within his experience. When, six years since, he was engaged in establishing the Unitarian Society in Savannah, two clergymen of different orthodox denominations called upon him, and both expressed their pleasure at the proposed erection of a place for Unitarian worship. They said that there were many in the city who did not attend the ministrations of religion, as already established; and they thought that to many such, a Unitarian church would be a means of improvement. They went further; they contributed, of their own means, to the erection of that church. These gentlemen recognized the Unitarian in his true charac-

ter, as a fellow-laborer with them in the great cause of human salvation.

Having thus alluded to the recent scenes of his own labors, he would say a few words in support of the claims of the South, as a field for Unitarian missionary effort. The claims of the West were founded on its strength, on its vast resources, its future importance, as the section which is to give laws and character to the whole country. But the claims of the South are founded on its wants. It is the part of our country to which the philanthropist looks with most of that interest which is characterized by doubt and fear. It is the section for whose spiritual good there is the most need that Christians should give their efforts and their prayers. Nor need we wonder at this. It is more than two hundred years since our favored New England was settled; while the State to which his remarks had peculiar reference, celebrated its *first* centennial anniversary but four years since. And if ever aid was wanted to the cause of Unitarian Christianity there, it is wanted now. The prospect of good to be done is greater than it ever has been, while the means for its accomplishment are more than ever deficient. The churches there have done their part well, while they had the ability; and so far as they still retain the ability, they will not be found wanting hereafter. During the past winter, even under circumstances of depression, a new field of labor has been opened. In conclusion, he would express the hope, that the next annual report would exhibit the results, if not of a southern tour on the part of our indefatigable Secretary, at least of missionary efforts by others, under the direction of the Association, in the field of religious enterprise that now lies open in the Southern States.

Mr. Bulfinch was followed by the Rev. Mr. HUNTOON, of Cincinnati, Ohio.

I rise, said he, Mr. President, to make a few observations in favor of the acceptance of the able and interesting Report, which has just been read. I do it especially on account of the encouraging and cheering views it presents of the cause of liberal Christianity at the West. I have no wish to undervalue or disparage the claims of the South, which have been so eloquently defended: I believe they are urgent, and should receive the attention of the Association, and the friends of our faith generally; but, sir, there are some considerations in the present *peculiar* circumstances of the West, which ought to receive the attention and stimulate the exertions of your society to *immediate* effort in behalf of that highly important field of missionary and Christian enterprise. I can but glance at a very few of these. The first and most weighty consideration, which, to my mind, calls for the *immediate* and *vigorous* efforts of our community in behalf of the West, is, that it is with the exception of a few cities and large towns, an *unoccupied field.* I speak now, sir, of the *far West*, — of that portion of the great valley of the Mississippi, which is just springing up into notice, and attracting the astonishment and admiration of the world. I call this, sir, a favorable field, for the planting of pure, liberal Christianity; because it is an *unoccupied* field. The great obstacle to the propagation of our faith has been prepossession. We have repeatedly said, give us an "open field and fair play," and we will be satisfied. In the old States, with one exception, Unitarian Christians are regarded and denounced as intruders and innovators. They are obliged, at their

outset, to meet and encounter a determined and embattled array of prejudice and jealousy from those who are already in possession of the public confidence, as the authorized guardians of the public faith. Look at the great cities along the Atlantic coast, from Maine to Georgia, for illustrations of this assertion. What is the cause of the solitary steeple of the Unitarian Church in them, but that numerous other steeples have been erected beforehand. The ground has been preoccupied; the work is arduous and the progress slow, which demands the double labor of pulling down old, long-cherished dogmas, and erecting, at the same time, a new superstructure of religious faith, opinions, and character. It resembles the toil of the builders of the second temple, who were obliged to hold the weapons of defence in one hand, while they "builded" with the other. In such circumstances of prepossession, we must be content to be humble gleaners in a field, which has been already harvested; and are called upon to be thankful if here and there a little handful, from the grasp of the reapers, is suffered to be gathered into our garners. We are told, and we are sometimes inclined to believe, that, if we can gather up the broken fragments that remain, after the full feast of those who have preceded us, it is all we can expect or hope for. And I would be satisfied with this where I could do no better. But, sir, as it respects the West, I, for one, am not satisfied with the fragments; I would step forward and attempt to secure my full slice of the whole loaf, at its first carving. There the field, I will not say, is "already white for the harvest." But it is *unoccupied* "fallow ground," ready to be entered and cultivated by the first occupant. This opens to liberal

Christians a totally new field of operations, and it presents an opportunity to them which they have not hitherto had, and may never again see, in our country, of entering upon their enterprises of missionary duty and Christian instruction, side by side, on a ground of equality of advantages and privileges, with other religious denominations. This reads to them a lesson of immediate action. Opportunity is the loudest call of Providence. This peculiar feature of the West, I fear, is not fully understood and appreciated by our denomination. They have been so accustomed to find every inch of ground preoccupied, that they are slow to believe that there is a single spot on earth upon which they can step, without its being deemed a trespass. It is of unspeakable importance to understand and take advantage of this state of things. Quite as important for the liberal Christian, as for the farmer, to secure his portion of the public domain, before it all goes into the possession of others. In this peculiar feature of the West, he reads the call of Heaven, to go forth in the strength of his faith, bearing precious seed, with the full assurance that he shall return rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. A field, rich, broad, free, and *unoccupied*, is opened before him, waiting, whitening, suffering for him to take possession. If he hesitates, — if he delays, — if he loiters, — he loses the best, the most favorable, most glorious opportunity ever offered him, for planting the truth, for the extension of his faith, and the triumph of his cause. Not only the destiny of our *country*, but the destiny of *Unitarianism* is to be decided in the West. *There* is to be fought the battle of both *civil* and *religious* freedom. *There* is the territory, and *there* will soon be the population, the phys-

ical and moral power, that will sink or save the nation. This mighty valley is half as large as Europe, four times as large as the Atlantic States, and twenty times as large as New England. Was there ever such an opportunity, such a field of magnificent hope and promise to the liberal Christian, to go forth and plant the seeds of an immortal harvest! And if he wait, sir, in doubt and unbelief, or in frigid, self-confiding indifference, that half-sister of death, and fold his arms in indolent self-esteem, that sure precursor of destruction, proudly vaunting the maxim, "Great is the truth and it will prevail," — as though *truth* was a personal identity, not connected with men's minds, — and not depending on human exertions for its support and triumph, — his opponents will have stepped forward, taking advantage of his apathy, and not only "claimed and floated" the field, but will have fortified it with a munition of prejudice and prepossession, which will require ages and generations to overthrow. What we do, then, should be done *now*, *immediately*. The after-chase is always arduous, sometimes doubtful. There is a tide in human things which waits not — moments on which the destiny of thousands balances, when the light dust may turn the scale for weal or wo, for freedom or bondage. Such is the crisis presented us at the West now, sir. This is the favorable moment for action, — zealous, united, concentrated action. A small, well-directed effort now made, to take possession of the land, which your able and indefatigable Secretary has explored, surveyed, and reported upon, may *now* secure to your cause, what years of toilsome, disheartening labor cannot recover, when lost. Other denominations seem to understand this, and are acting vigor-

ously in view thereof. They are sending out their missionaries, their schoolmasters, and Sunday school teachers, to all parts of the West. And we, sir, should be up and doing while the day lasts. In this great moral spring, opening at the West, we should break up the ground, and scatter with a bountiful hand the seed-wheat of pure, primitive Christianity over those broad and fertile regions, assured if we are prompt, and faithful, and persevering, the Lord of the harvest will reward us with a crop of an hundred fold.

Another consideration which urges us, sir, to lend immediate aid to the cause of liberal Christianity at the West, is that there is a general prevalence of liberality throughout that great region. Instances of bigotry, especially in cities and villages which have long been *preoccupied*, to be sure, there are; but the spirit of freedom, I might say, of *democracy*, in politics and religion, reigns with triumphant ascendancy there. The genius of the West is in fronted opposition to all narrowness, exclusiveness and bigotry. It frowns upon that spiritual pride, arrogant assumption, and priestcraft, which would fetter free inquiry, restrict right, intimidate reason, and chain the soul to human authority. This is the true preparation, the broad basis on which Unitarianism begins its edifice. Where this is laid the work is more than half accomplished. What does this circumstance teach us, but that now is the time to appropriate this liberality to the advancement of those doctrines and views of religion, which must live, and flourish, and prevail, only as that generous spirit gives them vitality and ubiquity? Here is the great hope of our success in the West. It is the *vox clamantis in Deserto*, "the voice crying in the

Desert," "prepare the way of the Lord." We have now only to lend some timely assistance to open the sanctuaries, erect the altars, and send out the ministers, and the liberal worshippers will gather themselves together around the shrines of a religion, which cherishes and unfolds all the noble and generous sentiments of our nature, and sanctifies all the sublime faculties of the soul, and qualifies it for heaven.

Another important consideration, why immediate aid should be given for planting Unitarian Christianity in the West, is, that it is the only religion that can save a large class of intelligent minds from infidelity. There are many of this description in that region, who have not been in the habit of hearing religion presented in any other form, than, to them, the forbidding one of Calvinism, or the repulsive one of fanaticism. Hence they have mistaken these forms of religion for Christianity itself, and have thence judged it to be at war with their whole experience of God and man, and the world around them, and have rejected its claims to a divine origin. They see that it is unsocial, unreasonable, and anti-liberal in its principles and its pratice. Now the only method to prevent them from rushing into the vortex of infidelity, is to present them with a religion, which commends itself to their understandings, approves itself to their reason and common sense, and urges its claims to a divine origin by its adaptation to the spiritual nature of man, to all the moral and intellectual wants of humanity, and they will reverence and embrace it. And such is the religion which the Unitarian finds in his Bible, and would send out for the light, hope, and salvation of his fellow man; — not the religion of bondage, of

fear, of force, or authority, but of freedom, of love, of a sound mind, of faith in God as a Father, in Christ as an elder brother, "sanctified and sent" to be the Saviour of the world. A religion which substitutes reason for dogmatism, — harmonizes revelation with nature, — time with eternity, — and man with God. Such a religion is mighty to save the soul from the death of sin, of doubt and infidelity.

Another pressing consideration, sir, and the only one I will now offer, why we should immediately send aid to the West, is the urgent want of our Unitarian friends, who are already there. This addresses itself to our hearts, to all our sympathies and sentiments as Christian brethren, and fellow-heirs of the same "blessed inheritance." Many of the new and flourishing villages that are springing up, as by enchantment, on the banks of the mighty lakes and rivers of the West, to which my remarks have been particularly directed, have received a large proportion of their enlightened and enterprising population from the Eastern and Middle States. A goodly number of them are liberal Christians, who, previous to their emigration, were connected with Unitarian societies; who have, with us, "taken sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." In their destitution of the word and ordinances of religion, they turn their eyes to us, in the land of their nativity, brethren of the same household of faith, for sympathy and encouragement, yea for aid and assistance, to enable them to plant the standard of pure and genuine Christianity in that great and growing empire. With the thousand demands of a new country, clearing of lands, erecting houses, constructing roads, digging

canals, making bridges, and providing for the innumerable "wants that *flesh* is heir to," it is not wonderful if they should need assistance in rearing the temples and supporting the altars of religion. No people ever did, in a new country, unaided, build up churches, and provide the competent supply of preachers. New England, though a *united* colony, bound to common efforts by a common origin, common language, and a common faith, did not do it. She was, as it were, a single household, acting in concert by mutal sympathies, sentiments, and hopes — and coerced to unity by common perils and common necessities; still *her* churches were built by foreign munificence, and, for the first generation, were supplied with preachers from the mother country. But the population of the great West is very differently situated. It is gathered from all quarters of the globe, constituting a mixed mass of tongues, and languages, and people, rushing in like the waters of the flood, and requiring for their moral preservation, their spiritual salvation, the immediate, efficient, and constant action of those religious institutions, upon which all moral safety and spiritual illumination depend. It is no disparagement to our brethren of the West to say, that under their present circumstances, they cannot furnish for themselves and those around them, these institutions. It would require something more than is demanded of human power for them to do it. It would be like requiring of the child the wisdom, the maturity, and the strength of manhood. And, as the child naturally turns to his parent for guidance, protection, and assistance, so must the West turn to the East for aid in this day of her moral need, this first season of her spiritual destitution. This, sir, I re-

peat it, is the time for us to do the work. What is done must be done quickly. The word must go forth, the gospel must be preached, the church must go up, or temporal prosperity may be spiritual death to thousands yet unborn — yea, to our country's future glory. For should the West be suffered to sink under the weight of an unwieldly and paralyzed mass of uneducated, unchristianized mind, the nation must feel the shock, and perhaps be carried down with it to irrecoverable ruin.

One of the most urgent wants of the West is the *church*, the place for public worship — not gorgeous temples, or splendid edifices; no, sir, they would be content and thankful for churches of the humblest model, and least costly structure. It is useless to send preachers, if they can find no place in which to preach. Barns and school houses they have not; and the inclemency of the open air, and the unobtrusive nature of our faith, and the modesty of our denomination, prevent our missionaries from carrying tents, or becoming street and field preachers. This want of houses of public worship is one, I am aware, which is not well understood or duly appreciated by persons unacquainted with the peculiar circumstances and character of the western population. But, sir, a church is the very starting point — the nucleus around which the society is to gather; — and unless means are sent to erect churches of the description I have now spoken of, it is next to useless to furnish preachers for many of the most important stations of the West. This is not *theory*, sir, it is the lesson of *experience;* and therefore I have been thus urgent upon this topic. Churches of all denominations *there* are *free;* and the societies of many towns and villages would be willing

and able to pay the salaries of their preachers, but they are not able to meet the first cost of the church. What the heart is to the human body, the church is to a Christian community;—just as vital, just as essential. The sun and the rain of heaven are not more necessary to call forth a bounteous vegetation, than religious institutions are to diffuse spiritual light and warmth for the bounteous fruits of righteousness and peace among a community of human beings. Let every denomination of christians, then, lend their aid to establish churches, and give moral power and spiritual strength to the West. I have not one word of reproach to utter against any sect, who wear the common and holy badge of Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic, for I have not been able to discover, in the West, that dangerous foe in the Catholic church, (which some have seen or imagined), to our free institutions. In the West, there is room enough for all, and work enough for all to do, without stopping to measure creeds or settle antiquated controversies. Let every denomination then go forth to their respective fields of Christian enterprise and benevolence, under their own banners, to give, and toil, and teach, and pray, till intelligence and truth, holiness and peace, cover the land, in all its length and breadth, even as the waters cover the sea. Lend but a helping hand to the West, to get up her churches, and supply her with the bread of life, while her forests are falling, her prairies are fencing, and her floods of population are rolling in, and afterwards her servants will not come back to ask you for your aid; for there is a generous and chivalrous munificence there, which, when it has performed the necessary work of self-preservation, will pour, with you, a noble

tide of rival benevolence, into that "river, which is to make glad the city of our God."

Mr Samuel Osgood, of Charlestown, then addressed the meeting:

I have passed the last year, Mr President, in the West. I rise for the purpose of recommending that region, as a field of Unitarian effort. I did not go to the West an enthusiast, nor am I prepared to speak the language of enthusiasm now. I never believed the extravagant stories so prevalent about that country—I never believed that it was a land, where the harvest could be enjoyed without the labor of industrious tillage—I never believed, that whole communities were waiting in eagerness to hear the gospel of Unitariansm, and that we need only to raise our voices, and constant crowds of listeners would gather around us. I did not carry these notions with me, nor do I maintain them, now that I have seen the West for myself. I think there are many obstacles in the way of our success in that region, which we are apt to lose sight of, and unless we are duly aware of these obstacles, disappointment and defeat must attend our efforts. Our zeal will be the nobler and the more effective, that springs up in view of these obstacles, and is willing and determined to overcome them.

Our Brother, who has just spoken, has said, that the West is an unoccupied field, and therefore presents an encouraging sphere of labor. This is in a great measure true, and I can speak in as decided terms as he can, of the duty and the happy hope of planting the standard of our pure and simple faith in the untenanted fields beyond the mountains. But sir, we must remember, that in one

sense, the land is occupied—we must remember, that bigotry and prejudice have gone into that region before us, and that, although the Ohio and Mississippi and Illinois and the lakes and plains of the West are not covered with churches of a hostile faith, yet there are many contrasts and opinions there, that work against us.

Bigotry has gone before us into those distant regions, and piled up obstacles in the way of our progress. Our Brother (Mr H.) has indeed seen a part of the country, which I know little of from observation. He has been in the new and remoter regions, while I have been chiefly in the older cities of the West, and he may therefore have met with fewer obstacles, than I have. Still, however, I believe, that there is hardly a city or a village in that far country, where the tongue of defamation has not preceded us, and calumniated our faith. We are obliged every where to combat the prejudices of the religious, or rather the theological part of the community. We indeed sometimes find villages of New England colonists, who hold our faith dear, and who pray that the altars of Unitarian worship may be raised amid their new homes. But such places are not frequent, and it is moreover by no means sure, that where we find New Englanders, we find friends to our faith. I allow all that is said of the liberality of the West. I believe that the individual mind is there left to take its own free course, as it is not its privilege to do here. But if it be the happy consequence of this liberty, that many free and noble spirits rise up, it is also the sad consequence, that many bigots and fanatics spring up and have free course—every noxious, as well as wholesome, plant bursts forth from that wild soil. I believe that the annals of New England, within recent

years, cannot furnish cases of bigotry equal to some examples, that the Western church has manifested. All this, I know, shows the duty binding on us to send the messengers of liberal Christianity there. It also shows the obstacles, that our champions must encounter. They must be prepared to be called infidels, and to prove by their deeds and doctrine, that they are indeed of the faithful.

And then, sir, there is indifference among a large part of the community, which we must struggle against, as well as against bigotry among another part. There is great indifference in the mass towards all religion, for they are so engrossed in business, that they give little time to serious reflection. Even among the attendants of churches, we must expect to find much opposition, even from intelligent men, whom we might hope to aid us. Many attend the Orthodox churches, merely because their wives do; and, while they hold liberal opinions, are too indifferent or timid to avow them. Many moreover look upon us as dangerous innovators, whose efforts will tend to undermine the popular faith and destroy the influence of what they in their miserable tone of patronage call *salutary superstition*, and which they strive to keep up as a necessary restraint upon the ignorant; a good coadjutor with the hangman, but which they, in their self-conceit, think entirely unnecessary for their own enlightened minds. They can do without religion, they say—they can see what is expedient, and be good members of society, without the priest's aid; and the more the priest governs the people by mystery and superstition, the more safe is society. You will find a great

deal of this kind of feeling among the principal men of the West, especially in the cities.

There, too, are many timorous minds, who although holding our opinions are afraid to avow them. Some even from New England, who have owned our faith in this land of liberality, but who are ashamed of it in a community, where Unitarianism is not fashionable.

Infidelity, too, opposes itself to us in the West; while at the same time, it offers us a noble field of labor. Often indeed the unbeliever comes to us for instruction, with an honest mind and eager to listen to the rational gospel, which we profess to bring. But oftener he comes to us doubting whether Christianity have any foundation in reason. Oftener he comes to us expecting to hear our condemnation of prevailing creeds, and to join with us in a sneer at the prevailing denominations. It is our blessed work to carry the gospel of faith and reconciliation to the sceptical and rebellious mind; but we must remember, and we shall work all the more effectually, if we do remember, that the work must be prosecuted by hard struggle and in the face of many obstacles.

I have touched upon some of the obstacles in the way of our success in the West, but I do not mention them, sir, with any faintness of heart or shrinking away from the field of labor, which Providence has opened before us. No, sir; every one of these obstacles should nerve us with new strength; they teach us the need of disseminating our faith, by showing us the lamentable ignorance prevailing in the West in regard to the simple doctrines of Jesus.

Now, Mr President, turning from this view of the obstacles in our way, if we consider the field of labor in

which our efforts are needed, it is impossible to speak in terms of exaggeration. I will not say, sir, that the field is unoccupied, but I will say, that even where it is most occupied by churches and ministers, there is a crying want for the heralds of Unitarianism. The great mass of the Western population are not even nominally under religious influences, and in all probability a great majority are in open or secret rebellion against the dominant Christian faith. No Unitarian can commune with the prevalent class of unbelievers without feeling their sad ignorance on religious subjects, and mourning that rational Christianity cannot be preached to them in such power as to dispel their doubts and break away their indifference.

And, sir, we have great reason to congratulate ourselves, that much has been done by us for liberal Christianity in the West, and that much success has attended our efforts.

Take even the lowest view of our efforts in the West—consider merely what has been done to diffuse our opinion there through the medium of Unitarian publications—and we find abundant reason to congratulate ourselves on what has been done, and to encourage us to fresh effort. Our Tracts have gone along the mighty rivers, and have been carried to the remote settlements, giving light to those who sat in darkness, and giving assurance to many that the religion which they had deemed a libel upon reason, is indeed the work of Divine wisdom, and impressed with the seal of the God of Nature. I have been rejoiced, sir, as I have been voyaging on the Western waters, to see the eagerness, with which our publications have been perused—even by the wayfarer. I have been

rejoiced to look upon that rough traveller sitting in the cabin of the steamboat, intent upon those well known pages, and undisturbed by the din of oaths, and by the clink of dollars upon the tables of the gamblers. It seems to me, sir, that our efforts have been abundantly rewarded, even if we consider only what has been done towards diffusing our speculative opinions in the West. But this does not constitute a tithe of what has been done.

Seven years since, not a single Unitarian church existed west of Pennsylvania. Now there is not a considerable city in that whole region, which does not contain either an established and flourishing congregation of our faith, or else the promising foundation of one.

And moreover, Mr. President, these societies have been built upon a truly Christian foundation and by men animated by the true Christian spirit. Our preachers have not appealed, as is too apt to be the case, merely to the anti-orthodox spirit. They have dealt little in sectarian rebuke, and none in party denunciation. Had they done more of this—had they dealt more in theological blackguard from the pulpit, they might have gathered more hearers around them, but could not have held them by an enduring bond. Angry passion, and not Christian love, would have been the principle of association, and of course would soon have died away. Now, on the contrary, the principle of union in our Western societies is of an enduring character.

We ought, moreover, Mr President, to feel encouraged in our Western labors, by the growing spirit of liberality, which our ministering brethren have conciliated towards our faith. A few years since, and our name was universally defamed there in the theological world—no respect

entertained for us, and even the rights of common social fellowship denied. A Trinitarian clergyman refused to perform the funeral service over the grave of a clergyman of our faith. Many other specimens of a like spirit were shown towards us. Now the state of things is much changed. The Orthodox papers quote from our distinguished writers, and seem to treat us, as if we were indeed a denomination of Christians. They, who would have once deemed themselves polluted by entering an Unitarian church, have of late listened to our preachers with delight, and have sometimes candidly confessed that their Calvinism was in danger, and that their own church was very prudent in dissuading its members from listening to our doctrines. I have seen, and have been rejoiced to see among our audiences representatives of all denominations. I have seen the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, the Episcopalian, the Swedenborgian, aye, sir, and the Catholic too—all attentive, and apparently interested, hearers of the Unitarian word ; and my joy was all the greater for seeing, side by side with them, the unbeliever, both the Deist and the Atheist

I wish you could have witnessed a scene, that occured in Kentucky, last winter ;—in Louisville, that city, which has perhaps more commerce, than any Western city, and with all her faults has as much to ennoble her, as any place we have visited. The scene I speak of, was the funeral of a member of the Unitarian church. One of the acutest minds with whom it has ever been my good fortune to commune was raised from unbelief into a living faith in Christianity, under the ministry of our worthy brother of that place. Never was Christian believer more devoted or happy in belief than this one. The

faith, that seemed so strong in life, was soon called to meet the trial of approaching death, and was triumphant. That funeral scene was one that touched the hearts of all present. No private house was deemed sufficient to contain those, whom the virtues or friendly offices of the deceased, drew to the funeral. The funeral services were performed in the church to a large assembly of all denominations. A gentleman remarked to me (he was a Judge) that he had never seen an instance of so great and heartfelt respect paid to the memory of the dead, and that it was all the more happy to contemplate, since it was not wealth, or proud station, but the virtues and talents of the deceased, that called that multitude together. This incident conciliated much good feeling towards the pastor and his church, and removed many an obstinate prejudice against that faith, which was thus shown to have borne blessed fruits. I mention this incident, sir, to show the power of our faith to disarm bigoted prejudice, as well as to lead the unbeliever into the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit.

We have reason to congratulate ourselves, not only upon the triumphs which we have gained over bigotry in the West, and the growth of liberal feeling, but also upon the encouragement to future effort afforded by these signs of growing liberality. I sincerely believe, sir, that the great body of Orthodox ministers in the West are far more liberal than they dare to confess, and that their people are far more liberal than their ministers. And it is sad to see the attempts that are made to cramp the free spirit, that is beginning to manifest itself. Ecclesiastical power, alarmed at the progress of liberal ideas, has sought to turn back the tide of opinion, and we have good

cause to accuse some distinguished minds in the church of timorously disguising their real belief, and even treacherously recanting their former avowals of liberality. Our denomination is called upon to co-operate with the liberal spirit, that is appearing in all the churches, and to strive to bring all the true hearted and free-minded into a better understanding of themselves and a warmer sympathy with each other. We are called to raise the true Catholic standard—the standard of a faith, that is narrowed by no party jealousies and sectarian dogmas, but which is as broad as the love of man and the love of God, and firm as the Eternal word. We are called upon to sound the trump that shall call together the true and the faithful, who are ready to build up the new church and declare the kingdom of him, who is the way, the truth, and the life. The signs appear of the manifestation of a more Catholic spirit. The voice of him crying in the wilderness is already heard. God grant, that he who is thus heralded may soon appear, and Jesus may be more gloriously manifested to the world, than he yet has been in the church.

I had wished, Mr President, to enlarge upon some other points of encouragement in our missionary efforts. I had wished especially to enlarge upon the good influences that our churches here in the East may be expected to derive from our efforts in the West. I had wished also to discuss the plans of action, that have been suggested. But the time bids me forbear. I can only add, that the sphere of action opened to us in the West, gives us bright hopes for the prosperity of our churches, and the energy of our body, here at home. The characters of those devoted spirits, who have made the West their

home, shows what a noble school it is in which they are learning. The new zeal of our churches here moreover shows, that missionary effort, like every work of charity, is twice blessed.

"It blesses him that gives, and him that takes."

We may have the glad hope, that our faith shall be preached in the new fields of the West, with a power, in which it has never before been proclaimed; and that Unitarianism losing the indifference that has too often palsied, and the dry, negative form that has too often cramped it, may go forth regenerate, free; a light to the nation, a glory to the Redeemer's kingdom. Perchance, sir, the day may come, when we shall look to the West for life and light, as the West now looks to us. If the course of civilization turns westward, and it indeed be, as it seems to be, a law of Providence—

"Westward the star of empire takes its flight,"

let us rejoice in the prospect, rather than mourn. If our cause shall flourish in the West, better than it has done here, let us in the true spirit rejoice, that though the mother be fair, the daughter is fairer. Let us rejoice and not be envious, if in any future day of our church, the West shall refresh the languid spirit of the East, and like the Roman daughter, pour back the tide of life into the veins of its spiritual parent.

Rev. Jason Whitman, of Portland, (Me), said; Mr President, it was my intention, when I entered this house this evening, to remain a silent and attentive listener. Thus far I have remained so. And my heart has been thrilled with what I have heard, both in the excellent

Report of your Secretary, and in the addresses of those who have preceded me. But I wish, if possible, to give to the glow of feeling, which has, I trust, been excited in all our breasts, a practical and profitable direction. We have heard, sir, this evening, much of the religious wants and general prospects of the great valley of the West. We have heard of the rapidity with which that region is advancing in population, in wealth and in political and moral influence; of the vast multitudes from all quarters, and of all shades of character, that are yearly pouring into that widely extended and fertile valley; of the great things that are doing, and that will be done there. And we have been told, too, of the miscellaneous and unformed character of the community there, in regard to the subject of religion; of the wide and promising field there is for Missionary labor, and of the great want there is of Missionary effort. I know not what effect these representations may have had upon other minds. But I for one have felt, as I listened, like taking my staff and starting for the far West. I have experienced a feeling almost bordering upon dissatisfaction with my station and despondency in regard to the result of my labors, at the small visible effects, which can be witnessed from the regular discharge of ministerial effort here, compared with the great good which might be accomplished by the same amount of labor there. But the indulgence of such feelings has been checked by the thought that the appointed sphere of my labors and the people of my affections are in the East. I have, therefore, asked how I could be benefited in the appropriate sphere of my ministerial and parochial labors by what I have here heard. Perhaps there may have been others whose state of feel-

ing has corresponded with my own, and who may be interested in the train of thought which has passed through my mind.

About twelve months since, I was extremely pained to hear from one of the young men of my parish that he thought of removing to the far West. He was a young man of promise in a religious point of view, deeply interested in religious subjects, conscientiously striving to form a religious character; one in whom I felt a deep interest, to whom I found myself becoming strongly attached, and upon whom I was beginning to look as one of my future props, supports and fellow laborers. I was pained at the thought of a separation. But the idea occurred to me that if any are to remove to the far West, it is of the utmost importance to the religious condition of that rising community, that they should be such as he was. With this feeling I looked abroad over the people of my charge and especially over the young men of my society. I said to myself, I know not how soon one and another of these young men, active and enterprising as they are, may be induced by the flattering prospects of the West to remove there—I asked what am I to do in view of this—the answer was, I am to labor more diligently than I ever yet have done, to awaken among the people of my charge a deep and pervading and influential interest in personal religion; to implant in their hearts the seeds of vital piety and true godliness; and to pray more fervently than I ever yet have done for the blessed influences of God's spirit to crown my labors with success. It has seemed to me a matter of the utmost importance, that those who go out to people that great Valley should be men of religious principle, of deep seated piety; men

seeking their own spiritual improvement; men striving to understand and obey the instructions, to imitate the example, and to manifest the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. Should five or six young men of such characters locate themselves in one of the rapidly rising villages of the West, they would form a nucleus around which others would collect; they would be ready to commence and to carry forward efforts for the maintenance of a religious society. It would be from such, that you would hear the call for preachers from the East sent forth in the loudest and most earnest tones. And, what is much more important, it would be such who would cheer, encourage and sustain the laborers who might be sent forth. Is it not then, I ask, of the utmost importance to the future religious character of the West, that those of our number, who go out to become its inhabitants, should be men of deep seated piety, firmly fixed religious principle, and active self-sacrificing zeal?

But when, I ask, is the most favorable season for the formation of characters like these? — and what the most favorable circumstances? Shall we leave our young men uninstructed and untrained in religion until their minds have become absorbed in worldly interests and worldly anxieties? Shall we send them out to the West destitute of religious principle, and place them in scenes, where every thing around them is calculated to produce a fever, I might almost say, of worldliness, and then send forth our missionaries to the almost hopeless task of arresting their attention, and calling them back to their own spiritual condition, prospects, and wants? To me it seems that the forming period of life is the time for the most vigorous efforts; the time, too, when such efforts

may be put forth with the greatest prospect of success. Is it not then of the utmost importance that efforts should be made to lay broadly and firmly the foundations of religious character here, amid the religious influences of New England, in those who may ere long go forth from these influences, to mingle in, and make a part of, the miscellaneous society of the West?

And now, I would ask, where do those go from, who are so rapidly filling the valley of the West? They go from the hills and valleys of New England — from our cities and towns and villages. I venture to say that scarcely a village can be found so small, so obscure, so destitute of the spirit of enterprise, that it has not sent some one or more to the great valley of the West. They are going, one after another, from all our parishes, from under the ministrations of us all. In this view of the subject, may we not all become faithful and efficient missionaries for the West, by becoming more faithful and efficient ministers of the gospel within our own parishes? Brethren, are you toiling on, from year to year, and almost despairing because you do not witness striking visible effects, as the result of your labors, and, especially, have these feelings been powerfully excited this evening by the representations you have heard of the great things which are doing at the West? Despair not. Remember that if you are instrumental, through the blessings of God upon your labors, of awakening a single individual to a deep and lively interest in personal religion, you may be the instruments of an untold amount of good even to the valley of the West. That individual may go forth breathing, in all his ordinary walk, the spirit of Christ; a missionary of the cross, preaching the gospel

in all his conduct, conversation, and influence. In this view of the subject, Mr. President, I thank God for the information which I have this evening gained, and for the emotions which have been excited in my heart. I feel confident that, as I return to my people, it will be with a more ardent and enlightened zeal to labor more faithfully and pray more fervently than I have ever yet done. And I would hope, brethren, that we may all of of us be quickened, by what we have here heard, to a more diligent, prayerful and faithful discharge of our duties in our respective spheres of labor.

But I see before me a large assembly of others, besides this goodly collection of Christian ministers. I would hope that the view of the subject which I have presented may render the evening's exercises profitable to all. Are you a Sabbath school teacher, and is your heart burning within you to do something for the great valley of the West? Look upon that little circle of lads who surround you upon each successive Sabbath. Soon they will be beyond your influence; soon it may be they will be among the active and influential inhabitants of the West. You may be the happy instruments of implanting in their now susceptible hearts the seeds of piety, virtue and holiness; and of sending them forth into whatever scenes they may go, active laborers for the Lord Jesus. To you, then, who are Sunday school teachers, I would say, let the glow of feeling and interest for the far West, which may this evening have been excited, render you more diligent and more prayerful in your labors with your respective classes.

Are you a father or a mother? and has there been this evening excited within your heart an earnest desire to

do something for the great valley of the West? Look upon those little prattlers who are now the objects of your warmest affection and deepest solicitude. Soon they will leave you and go forth active and responsible men. Upon you, it, in a great measure, under God, depends, what shall be the characters they may maintain, and what the influence they may exert. Should you now neglect your parental duties, they may go forth worldly minded and indifferent to the subject of religion; or they may go forth dissipated, vicious, and abandoned, exerting a pestiferous influence wherever they go. Should you discharge faithfully and as unto the Lord your parental duties, you may have the joy of seeing your children growing up around you in virtue and holiness, you may have cause to rejoice hereafter that you have sent forth to the valley of the West those whose conduct, and example, and spirit shall exert a purifying influence upon the community there — yea, cause to rejoice that by the faithful discharge of your duties at home you have been an active and efficient missionary, in spreading the Redeemer's kingdom abroad.

Mr. President, let me not be misunderstood. I am a friend of missionary effort. I would say to every one before me, Have you that of worldly substance which you can spare, or which, by retrenching your enjoyments and indulgences you might spare, I would say, give, and give liberally, to the missionary cause. To every young candidate for the ministry I would say, Is there not here a field, a wide and important field, open for your labors? Consider, then, seriously whether it may not be your duty to enter upon and attempt to occupy it. To those of our faith, who have already gone out to the West, I

would bid a most hearty God's speed. I would assure them that they are remembered in our prayers. I would hope, that as there may be need, they will receive from our purses substantial testimony that we remember them. I would acknowledge that to them am I indebted for the influence which has come back from their ardent zeal and active exertions, warming my own heart, and quickening my own efforts. Yes, sir, I am a friend to missionary effort, and would do all in my power to advance the missionary cause. And it is for this reason, sir, that I have endeavored to give such a direction to the thoughts as may prevent our dismissing the missionary effort from our minds in despair of being able to do aught for its advancement — such a direction as may send us home from this evening's exercises, more than ever interested in the cause, and excited by our interest to greater faithfulness in our respective spheres of duty.

The Rev. Mr Sewall, of Danvers, next addressed the meeting. He spoke of the need of mission movements, as well as mission talking and preaching. We need money, to send the living voice to the West and South, the North and East. How shall this be raised? By a *general* effort. One man's donation could do nothing alone, but added to a hundred others, it would effect much good. He had read somewhere of a coral mountain which sprung up from the very depths of the ocean, of vast dimensions, which no surges could shake, and no tempest affect. This mountain was composed of exceedingly minute insects, which one by one were thereon deposited and turned to stone, until it reached above the surface of the deep itself. It was a happy

illustration of what united and continued exertion would accomplish in the moral world.

In New England, he doubted not but there might be one hundred churches, which might easily contribute annually 25 dollars. This would make 2500 dollars. And of the clergy there might, he thought, be found a hundred, who would annually contribute 5 dollars each; which added to the above sum, would swell it to *three thousand dollars.* This would, with the aid which the Western societies might afford, provide at least *six* missionaries annually. This would be *something;* — for a people so small as ours was, it would be much.

Mr S. followed up the topic in his usual felicitous manner, and closed by urging on the Association and ministers, an immediate attention to the subject.

The Rev. T. R. Sullivan remarked, that he did not rise with the view of heightening the deep sensation that pervaded the audience, but to aid in turning it to some practical account. His feelings also had been interested, but he could not say with one of the speakers who had preceded him, that he had felt even a momentary impulse to "take his staff" and go forthwith westward. On the contrary his experience had taught him to shrink at the difficulties and responsibilities of the missionary service. In his opinion we should endeavor to engage men of the first ability in that service.

But his chief intention in rising was to call attention to that part of the General Secretary's Report which related to the establishment of a Theological Institution in the West,— a measure which we are told by the Secretary has the universal approbation and good wishes

of our friends in that region. This suggestion,—which had been overlooked by all the preceding speakers,—was, in his view, worthy of particular notice. Where great talents could be engaged in the missionary work, it should be done; but when extraordinary ability is not to be commanded, its place may be supplied by appropriate qualifications;—and it would be the effect of such an Institution to raise up among the Western people preachers "from the midst of them," who (like the ministry educated among us here) would possess the capacity to be useful, wherever their lines might fall to them, from their intimate knowledge of the character and wants of those among whom it might be their lot to labor. This, for a prospective measure of permanent usefulness, would be comparatively more effectual than the annual mission of strangers for a short term of service, however valuable the services of such, until something more systematic was established.

After the addresses, which were deeply interesting to a numerous audience, the Report was accepted by a unanimous vote. The meeting was then closed by singing the "Dismission Hymn."

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

---

1. The name of this Association shall be THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

2. The object of this Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity throughout our country.

3. Unitarian Christians throughout the United States shall be invited to unite and co-operate with this Association.

4. An annual subscription of one dollar shall constitute a person a member so long as such subscription shall be paid; and a subscription of thirty dollars shall constitute a person a member for life.

5. The officers shall be a President, fifteen Vice Presidents, a General Secretary, who shall have the care of all the business and interests of the Association under the control of the Executive Committee, an Assistant Secretary who, in case of the absence or sickness of the General Secretary, shall perform such duties of a Recording and Corresponding Secretary as may require immediate attention, a Treasurer, and three Directors.

6. The Directors, Secretaries, and Treasurer, shall constitute the Executive Committee, who shall meet once in each month, and shall have the direction of the funds and operations of the Association.

7. An annual meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Executive Committee shall deem advisable, of which due notice shall be given, and at which officers shall be chosen, reports be made, and any other business be transacted, which may come before the Association.

8. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur among the officers between any two annual meetings.

9. Any amendments of this constitution shall be proposed at one annual meeting, and may be accepted at the next anniversary, if two thirds of the members present be in favor of such amendments.

10. There shall also be a Council of the Association, consisting of not less than twentyfive, nor more than seventyfive members, to be nominated by the presiding officer, and chosen by a hand vote at the annual meeting, whose duty it shall be, whenever it is necessary, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, to consider and determine what further measures may be taken to increase the usefulness of the Association, by what means they may be carried into execution, and in what manner funds can be provided for the purpose. The Council shall hold a stated annual meeting on the Thursday succeeding the annual meeting of the Association, at four o'clock, P. M. The Executive Committee shall call special meetings whenever they shall deem it necessary, or at the request of any five members of the Council; and twelve members shall constitute a quorum. The powers of the Executive Committee, with regard to all matters not acted upon by the Council are to remain the same as heretofore.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, September 23, 1826, as amended March 18, 1830.

'*Resolved*, That every member of the Association be entitled to one copy of every tract *of the first and second series*, published by the Association *during the year for which his subscription is entered.*'

Vote of the Executive Committee, passed January 4, 1826.

'*Voted*, that no society be recognised as auxiliary to this

Association, the terms of subscription to which are less than those required in the Constitution of this Association.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, June 20, 1833.

Voted, That the 4th Article of the Constitution be so construed, that any one who shall pay thirty dollars for the General Agency of the American Unitarian Association, either at once, or by annual instalments within five years, shall be considered a life member.

CLERGYMEN MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

The following Clergymen have been made members for life of the American Unitarian Association, by the donation of thirty dollars or more, principally from ladies of their respective societies.

Abbot, Abiel.
Alden, Seth.
Alger, Horatio.
Allen, Joseph.
Bancroft, Aaron, D. D.
Barrett, Samuel.
Bartlett, John.
Barry, William.
Bascom, Ezekiel L.
Bates, Reuben.
Bigelow, Andrew.
Brazer, John.
Briggs, Charles.
Brooks, Charles.
Buckingham, Edgar.
Channing, Wm. E., D. D.
Clarke, Amos.
Colman, Henry.
Damon, David.
Dewey, Orville.
Doggett, Thophilus P.
Edes, Henry, D. D.
Emmons, Henry.
Farley, Frederick A.
Field, Joseph.
*Flint, Jacob.
Flint, James, D. D.
Fox, Thomas B.
Furness, Wm. H.
Frost, Barzillai.
Gannett, Ezra S.
Gannett, Thomas B.
Greenwood, F. W. P.
Hall, Edward B.
Hamilton, Luther.
Hill, Alonzo.

* Dead.

Hosmer, George W.
Howe, Moses.
Ingersoll, George G.
Johnson, Rufus A.
Kendall, James, D. D.
Lamson, Alvan.
Lincoln, Calvin.
*Little, Robert.
Livermore, A. A.
Loring, Bailey.
Lothrop, Samuel K.
May, Samuel, Jr.
Moore, Josiah.
Motte, Melish I.
Muzzey, Artemas B.
Nichols, Ichabod, D. D.
Noyse, George R.
Osgood, Peter.
Palfrey, John G., D. D.
*Parker, Nathan, D. D.
Parkman, Francis, D. D.
Peabody, Wm. B. O.
Pierpont, John.
Phipps, H. G.
Ripley, Ezra, D. D.
Ripley, George.
Ripley, Samuel.
Richardson, Joseph.
Robbins, Samuel D.
Robbins, Chandler.
Robinson, Charles.
Rogers, T. F.
Sewall, Charles C.
Sewall, Edmund Q.
Stetson, Caleb.
Storer, John P. B.
Sullivan, Thomas R.
Sweet, John D.
Thayer, Christopher T.
Thompson, James W.
Thompson, James.
Walker, James, D. D.
Ware, Henry, Jr., D. D.
Ware, William.
Wellington, Charles.
Wells, George W.
*Whitman, Bernard.
Whitman, Nathaniel.
Young, Alexander.

OTHER MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

Abbot, Samuel.
Adams, Benjamin T.
Adams, James, Jr.
Adams, Philip.
Alger, Cyrus.
Alger, Francis.
Ames, David W.
Ames, Mrs David.
Andrews, Ebenezer T.
Aspinwall, Samuel.
Atherton, Charles H.
Appleton, Nathan.
Ball, S. S.
Bangs, Josiah.
Barrett, Nathaniel A.
Baker, Henry F.
*Bird, John H.
Blanchard, Hezekiah.

Blake, Mrs Sarah.
Bliss, Mrs B. D.
Bliss, Theodore.
Bradlee, Joseph P.
Bracket, Samuel E.
Brewster, Misses.
Brooks, Peter C.
Bond, George.
Bond, George W.
Bowditch, Nathaniel.
Bowles, Samuel.
Cartwright, Charles W.
Carew, Joseph.
Chapman, Mrs Jonathan.
Chapin, Harvey.
Clapp, Joshua.
Colton, George.
Cotton, John.
Cotton, Joseph, Jr.
Cobb, Elijah.
Coffin, George W.
Coolidge, Joseph.
Crocker, James H.
Curtis, Joseph.
Cushing, T. P.
Dascomb, Thomas R.
Dana, Dexter.
Davis, Charles S.
Danforth, Isaac.
Davis, James.
Davis, James, Jr.
Denny, Daniel.
Dorr, Samuel.
Dorr, John.
Draper, James.
Dwight, William.
Dwight, George.
Dwight, Mrs Mary.
Dwight, Jonathan.
Eager, William.
Edwards, Elisha.
Ellis, David.
Emerson, George B.
Emmons, John L.
Everett, Otis.
Fairbanks, Stephen.
Fairbanks, Henry P.
Fearing, Albert.
Fitch, Jeremiah.
Fisher, Joshua.
Foster, Charles W.
Fowle, C. S.
Foster, Charles A.
Foot, Homer.
Francis, Eben.
Frost, George.
Gasset, Henry.
Gray, Frederick T.
Gray, Harrison.
Gould, Benjamin A.
Hammond, Samuel.
Hammond, Daniel.
Hall, Jacob.
Hawes, Prince.
Hedge, Barnabas.
Hews, Abraham Jr.
Hewett, H. N.
Heath, Charles.
Hendee, Charles J.
Howard, Abraham.
Howard, Charles.
Howard, John.

Howe, John.
Hunt, Nathaniel P.
Inches, Henderson.
Inches, Miss.
Jackson, Francis.
*Johnson, Milton.
Johnson, James.
Jones, Mrs. J. C.
King, Gedney.
King, Daniel P.
Kuhn, George H.
Lawrence, William.
Lawrence, Amos.
Lamson, Benjamin.
Lamson, John.
Lane, George.
Lewis, S. S.
Lincoln, Oliver.
Lincoln, M. S.
Livermore, Isaac.
Low, Francis.
Low, John J.
Lombard, Ammi C.
Loring, William J.
Loring, J.
May, Samuel.
May, Joseph.
Marsh, Ephraim.
Mellen, Michael.
*Metcalf, E. W.
Morgan, Charles W.
Morton, Ichabod.
Munson, Israel.
Newell, J. R.
Nichols, Charles C.
Olmsted, Charles H.
Orne, William W.
Otis, Harrison G.
Parker, Daniel P.
Parsons, Thomas.
Parsons, William.
Parkman, George.
*Parkman, Mrs Sarah.
Peabody, Joseph.
Peabody, Mrs W. B. O.
*Peele, Willard.
Perkins, Thomas H.
*Pickman, T. Benjamin.
Pickman, Dudley L.
Pierce, S. B.
Pierce, John B.
Preble, William B.
Prescott, William.
Phillips, Stephen C.
Phillips, Hon. Jonathan.
Phillips, Mrs John.
Rantoul, Robert.
Rice, Henry.
Ripley, Ezra.
Richardson, James B.
Rhodes, Stephen.
Rogers, John.
Rogers, John Gray.
Russell, John B.
Russell, Nathaniel.
Saunders, Mrs Elizabeth.
Salisbury, Samuel.
Savage, James.
Seaver, George.
*Seaver, Charles.
Seaver, Benjamin.
Shaw, Robert G.

Shaw, Lemuel.
Shaw, Francis G.
Shove, Jonathan.
Smith, Melancthon.
Sprague, Noah P.
*Stanton, Francis.
Stearns, Henry.
Story, Joseph.
Swett, Samuel.
Sweetser, Samuel.
Sullivan, William.
St. John, Samuel.
Stebbins, Festus.
Townsend, Henry B.
Thomson, John.
Tucker, Richard D.
Tuckerman, Gustavus.
Wales, Samuel, Jr.
Ward, Artemas.
Watts, Francis O.
Ware, John.
Weld, John D.
Weld, Daniel.
West, Nathaniel.
Wheeler, Jonathan.
White, Charles.
White, Daniel A.
Whitney, Jonathan.
Whitney, B. B.
Willis, William.
Wilkinson, Simon.
Williams, Moses.
Williams, J. D. W.
Williams, David W
Williams, George F.
Williams, John D.
Williams, Isaac.
Worthington, William.
Wood, Mrs J. V.

TRACTS

PRINTED BOF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

FIRST SERIES, 12MO.

	Price: Cents.
Vol. I.	
No. 1. The Faith once delivered to the Saints. By H. Ware, Jr.	4
No. 2. One Hundred Scriptural Arguments for the Unitarian Faith.	2
No 3. On Human Depravity. By Edmund Q. Sewall.	5
No. 4. Omniscience the Attribute of the Father only. By Joseph Hutton.	5
No. 5. On Religious Phraseology. By Orville Dewey.	5
No. 6. A Letter on the Principles of the Missionary Enterprise. By Joseph Tuckerman.	5
No. 7. The Unitarian's Answer. By Orville Dewey.	6
No. 8. A Discourse on the Evidences of Revealed Religion. By William E. Channing.	5
No. 9. Cause of the Progress of Liberal Christianity in New England. By James Walker.	3
No. 10. Remarks on a Popular Error respecting the Lord's Supper. By F. W. P. Greenwood.	2
No. 11. Unitarianism Vindicated against the Charge of not going far enough. By James Walker.	4
Vol. II.	
No. 12. A Dialogue on Providence, Faith and Prayer.	4
No. 13. A Discourse on being Born again. By Mrs. Barbauld.	3
No. 14. On Experimental Religion. By Convers Francis.	4
No. 15. The Doctrine of Pronouns applied to Christ's Testimony of himself. By Noah Worcester.	5

No. 16. On some corruptions of Scripture. By Joseph Allen. - - - - - - - - 5
No. 17. On Tests of True Religion. By Orville Dewey. 4
No. 18. On the Evidence necessary to establish the Doctrine of the Trinity. By Samuel C. Thatcher. 3
No. 19. The Apostle Paul a Unitarian. By Caleb Stetson. - - - - - - - - - 5
No. 20. On the Doctrine of Two Natures in Jesus Christ. By Alvan Lamson. - - - 5
No. 21. A Dialogue on some of the Causes of Infidelity. 4
No. 22. Excuses for the Neglect of the Communion considered. By Samuel Barrett. - - 4
No. 23. A Dialogue between a Christian and a Deist. 4
No. 24. Divine Revelation advocated and illustrated. 4
No. 25. The Divine Authority of the Christian Revelation acknowledged. - - - - - 4

Vol. III.

No. 26. On the Original Text of the New Testament. 4
No. 27. The Power of Unitarianism over the affections. By John Brazer. - - - - - 4
No. 28. The Doctrine of Religious experience explained and enforced. By Samuel Barrett. - 4
No. 29. Unitarian Christianity free from objectionable Extremes. By Samuel Gilman. - - 4
No. 30. On the New Testament conformed to Griesbach's Text. By F. W. P. Greenwood. - 4
No. 31. The Danger of Delay. By William Ware. 5
No. 32. The Theology of the Cambridge Divinity School. By F. W. P. Greenwood. - - 3
No. 33. On Christian Salvation. By Bernard Whitman. 6
No. 34. The Divinity of Jesus Christ. By George Ripley. - - - - - - - - - 4
No. 35. The Genius of Christianity. By William H. Furness. - - - - - - - - 4
No. 36. Evangelical Unitarianism adapted to the Poor and Unlearned. By Alexander Young. - 4

No. 37. Practical Infidelity briefly considered in reference to the Present Times. - - - 3
No 38. Thoughts on Vital Religion. - - - - 3

Vol. IV.

No. 39. On the Exclusive System. By James Walker. 5
No. 40. The Importance and Method of Early Religious Education. By Henry Montgomery. 6
No. 41. On Prejudice. By Samuel J. May. - - 3
No. 42. The Prospects and Claims of Pure Christianity. By John G. Palfrey. - - - - 5
No 43. The Beneficial Tendency of Unitarianism. By Lant Carpenter. - - - - - 4
No 44. An Explanation of the Words, 'By nature Children of Wrath,' found in Ephesians ii. 3. By F. A. Farley. - - - - - -
No. 45. An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles. By John Locke. - - - 4
No. 46. On Piety at Home. By Caleb Stetson. - 2
No. 47. The Antiquity and Revival of Unitarian Christianity. By William Ware. - - - 4
No. 48. Mr. Tuckerman's Seventh Semiannual Report of his Service as a Minister at Large in Boston. 5
No. 49. The Reports of the American Unitarian Association, prepared for the Sixth Anniversary, May 24, 1831. - - - - - - 6

Vol. V.

No. 50. A Comparison of the Good and Evil of Revivals. By E. S. Gannett. - - - 4
No. 51. An Answer to the Question, Why are you a Christian? By John Clarke. - - - 5
No. 52. The Scripture Doctrine of Redemption by Christ Jesus. By Lant Carpenter. - - 2
No. 53. On Change of Heart. By Cazneau Palfrey. 3
No. 54. Mr. Tuckerman's Eighth Semiannual Report. 6

No. 55. The Apostle Peter a Unitarian. By Samuel Barrett. - - - - - - - - 4
No. 56. On Substitutes for Religion. By John Pierpont. 4
No. 57. On Zeal. By Joseph Field. - - - 3
No. 58. An Outline of the Testimony of Scripture against the Trinity. By Henry Ware, Jr. 4
No. 59. What is it to be a Unitarian? By Edward B. Hall. - - - - - - - - - 4
No. 60. Mr. Tuckerman's Ninth Semiannual Report. 6
No. 61. The Reports of the American Unitarian Association presented at the Seventh Anniversary, May 29th, 1832. - - - - - - 6

Vol. VI.

No. 62. The Gospel Exhibited in a Unitarian Minister's Preaching. By George R. Noyes. - - 5
No. 63. The Christian Change described by the Apostle Peter. By Converse Francis. - - - 3
No. 64. Unitarians entitled to the Name of Christians. By Joseph Hutton, LL. D. - - - 4
No. 65. My religious experience at my Native Home. By Warren Burton. - - - - - - 5
No. 66. Mr. Tuckerman's Tenth Semiannual Report, as a Minister at large in Boston. - - - 6
No 67. The Practical Importance of the Unitarian Controversy. By W. J. Fox, of London. - 3
No. 68. Some Scriptural Readings, compared with some Unscriptural Sayings. By E. S. Goodwin. 4
No. 69. The Doctrines of the Trinity and Transubstantiation Compared. By George Ripley. - 2
No. 70. On Erroneous views of Death. By Orville Dewey. - - - - - - - - 5
No. 71. 'Come and See,' or the Duty of those who dread the Sentiments of other Christians. By W. B. O. Peabody. - - - - - - -
No. 72. Mr. Tuckerman's Eleventh Semiannual Report, as a Minister at Large in Boston. - -

No. 73. The Eighth Report of the American Unitarian Association, with the proceedings of the Annual Meeting, May 28, 1833. - - - 6

VOL. VII.

No. 74. The Doctrine of Atonement. By the late Rev. Henry Turner, of Nottingham, England. - 4
No. 75. Claims of the Gospel on Unitarian Christians. 4
No. 76. Mr. Barnard's First Report of his Service, as a Minister at Large in Boston. - - 3
No. 77. Religious Opinions and Example of Milton, Locke, and Newton. By Rev. Henry Acton, Exeter, England. - - - - - 6
No. 78. Explanation of Isaiah ix. 6, and John i. 1. By George R. Noyes. - - - - - 3
No. 79. Presumptive Arguments in favor of Unitarianism. By M. L. Hurlburt. - - 5
No. 80. Testimonies from the Neighborhood of the Eternal World on Acceptance with God. By Noah Worcester, D. D. - - - 4
No. 81. Jesus Christ not a Literal Sacrifice. By John Pierpont. - - - - - 4
No. 82. Three Important Questions answered relating to the Christian Name, Character, and Hopes. By Henry Ware, Jr. - - 4
No. 83. Mr. Barnard's Second Report of his Service, as a Minister at Large in Boston. - - 3
No. 84. The Ninth Report of the American Unitarian Association, with the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, May 27, 1834. - - 6

VOL. VIII.

No. 85. Excuses for the Neglect of Benevolent Efforts considered. By Andrew P. Peabody. - 3
No. 86. Christ the Image of God. By J. W. Thompson. 3
No. 87. The Philosophy of Man's Spiritual Nature in

Regard to the Foundations of Faith. By James Walker. - - - - 4

No. 88. The Efficacy of Prayer. By John Brazer. - 4

No. 89. The Foundation of our Confidence in the Saviour. By Alvan Lamson. - - 4

No. 90. Apologies for Indifference to Religion and its Institutions Examined. By Samuel Barrett. 4

No. 91. Hints on Religious Feelings. By Jason Whitman. - - - - - 4

No. 92. Piety and Morality. Their Mutual Importance as Elements of Christian Character. By George Whitney. - - - - 3

No. 93. The Promise of Jesus to the Pure in Heart. By F. W. P. Greenwood. - - - 2

No. 94. Christian Unitarianism not a Negative System. By Ezra S. Gannett. - - - 4

No. 95. The Tenth Report of the American Unitarian Association, with the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, May 26, 1835. - - 6

VOL. IX.

No. 96. A Brief Statement and Explanation of the Unitarian Belief. By Orville Dewey. - - 3

No. 97. False Witnesses Answered. By James Freeman Clarke, Louisville, Ky. - - - 2

No. 98. The Existing State of Theology as an Intellectual Pursuit, and Religion as a Moral Influence. By James Martineau, England. - 4

No. 99. Sober Thoughts on the State of the Times, addressed to the Unitarian Community. 6

No. 100. Doctrinal Distinctions not always Doctrinal Differences. By A. B. Muzzy. - - 3

No. 101. A Discourse on the Law of the Spiritual Life. By James Walker. - - - 3

No. 102. On Spirituality of Character. By E. Q. Sewall. 5

No. 103. I am the Way. Addressed to those who "Can-

not see their way Clear" to observe the Communion. By S. K. Lothrop. - - 3

No. 104. An Argument from Scripture History against the Trinity. By S. G. Bulfinch. - - 3

No. 105. Christianity as a Purely Internal Principle. By Convers Francis. - - - 4

No. 106. The Christian Doctrine of Retribution. By George R. Noyes. - - - - 3

No. 107. The Eleventh Report of the American Unitarian Association, with the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, May 24, 1836. - - 6

Vol. X.

No. 108. A Discourse on some of the Distinguishing Opinions of Unitarians. By William E. Channing, D. D. - - - - 5

No. 109. On Profession of Religion. By Rev. Orville Dewey. - - - - - 5

No. 110. Thoughts on the Personality of the Word of God. By Noah Worcester, D. D. - - 4

No. 111. The Scriptural Doctrine of Good Works. By Edward B. Hall. - - - - 4

No. 112. On the Use and the Meaning of the phrase "Holy Spirit." By Henry Ware, D. D. 4

No. 113. A Review of Atheism, for Unlearned Christians. By Noah Worcester, D. D. - - 6

No. 114. Virtue, not Happiness, the End of Man's Creation. By James D. Green. - - 3

No. 115. Why should we labor to extend our Faith? By S. K. Lothrop. - - - - 2

No. 116. The History of Christ, a Testimony that the Father is the Only True God and sole Object of Adoration. By W. J. Fox. - - 3

No. 117. Religious and Moral Wants of the West. By William G. Eliot, St. Louis, Missouri. - 3

No. 118. On Denying the Lord Jesus. By the late Bernard Whitman - - - 6

No. 119. The Twelfth Report of the American Unitarian Association, with the proceedings of the Annual Meeting, May 30, 1837. - - 6

SECOND SERIES, 18mo.

No. 1. Objections to Unitarian Christianity Considered. By William E. Channing. - - - 2

No. 2. A Serious and Friendly Address to the Anxious Inquirer. - - - - - 2

No. 3. One God and One Mediator. - - - 2

No. 4. The Apostles' Creed, as contained in their Public Discourses. - - - - - 1

No 5. Two Objections to the right and duty of Free Inquiry and Private Judgment answered. By Jonathan Mayhew. - - - 1

No. 6. Suggestions respecting the Formation of Auxiliaries to the A. U. A. - - - 2

No. 7. Funeral Consolations. By Thomas Emlyn. 3

No. 8. A Pastoral Letter by a Unitarian Minister. - 2

No. 9. Ejaculatory Prayer, Daily Use of Scripture. By Joseph Tuckerman. - - - 2

No. 10. On Revivals. By Jonathan Farr. - - 2

No. 11. Twenty Questions to Trinitarians, with Answers from Scripture. By James Kay. - 2

No. 12. A Funeral Address. By Rev. Samuel Ripley. 1

INDEX OF VOLUME X.

A.

Atheism, Review of, 163. The Atheist as well as the Christian has a creed, 166. Advantages of the two creeds compared, 170. Objections to be encountered by those who believe there is a God, 176. Arguments and objections against Atheism, 181. Hypothesis that men have always existed, 191. Demoralizing tendency of Atheism, 197. Objections and concessions, 202.

Auxiliaries formed the past year, 331.

B.

Book and Pamphlet Society, 329.

Bulfinch, Rev. Mr. His remarks at the annual meeting, 331.

C.

Channing, Rev. Dr. His discourse on some of the distinguishing opinions of Unitarians, delivered at Baltimore, in 1819. Twelfth edition, 1.

Christ, History of, a Testimony that the Father is the only God. Christ was born, 4. Increased in wisdom and stature, 5. Baptized, 6. Tempted, 6. Prayed, 7. Had feelings and sympathies inconsistent with his being God, 8. As a Teacher asserts the sole Deity of the Father, 9. As a sufferer showed himself not to be God. Raised from the grave. Honored and exalted by God, 10.

Clarke, Rev. Mr, 335.

Constitution of the A. U. A. 376.

D.

Denying the Lord Jesus. 1st. The Jews accused Jesus of making himself God. In so doing they contradicted his declarations; and consequently denied the Lord Jesus, 276. 2d. If you say that Jesus is God, you contradict the declarations of Moses and the Prophets, 278. 3d. His own declarations, 279. 4th. The declarations of the Apostles. 5th. All the remarkable facts of his history, 281.

Dewey, Rev. Orville, on Profession of Religion, 49.

Donations, 331.

E.

Eliot, Rev. William G. On the Religious and Moral Wants of the West, 251. Some account of his Society at St Louis, 338.

347

F.

Faith, our, Why should we labor to extend it? 225. 1. Christ commands it, 228. 2. Demanded by the spirit of the gospel. 3 Demanded by the condition of our country, 232.
Father, The, the Only God. Unitarians should be consistent in its profession, 247. Zealous in its diffusion, 249. Should conform to its dictates, 262.
Foreign Correspondence, 330.
Fox, Rev. W. J. His Tract, The history of Christ, a testimony that the Father is the only God and sole object of adoration, 237.

G.

Good Works, Scriptural Doctrine of, 117. The Scriptures never speak disparagingly of good works, 121. They strongly recommend them, 127. Bring them into vital connexion with the first principles and truths of Christianity, 128. Good works mean working good, 134.
Green, Rev. James D. His Tract. Virtue, not happiness, the end of man's creation.

H.

Hall, Rev. Edward B. On the Scriptural doctrine of good works, 117.
Holy Spirit — Used to express, 1. God himself, 144. 2. the power, wisdom, will, or command of God, 146. 3. Miraculous or only extraordinary power, wisdom, courage or skill qualifying the person for some special office or service, 149. 4. The moral influence employed by God in any way, 152. Holy spirit not a person, 153. Explanation of the term comforter, &c. 14, 15 and 16th chaps. John, 156. Promise fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, 158.
Hosmer, Rev. Mr. 333.
Huntoon, Rev. Mr. His remarks at the annual meeting, 347.

I.

Illinois, the new societies in that State, 335.

J.

Jones, Rev. A. D. His remarks at the annual meetings, 342.

L.

Life members. 331 and 378.
Lothrop, Rev. S. K. His tract, "Why should we labor to extend our faith?" 225.

M.

Missionaries, the number employed, 332.

O.

Officers of the A. U. A. 324.
Osgood, Mr. Samuel. His remarks at the annual meeting, 387.

P.

Personality of the word of God. Considered under sixteen heads, 93.

R.

Report, Twelfth Annual of the A. U. A. 319.

S.

Sewall, Rev. Mr. His remarks at the annual meeting, 373.
Sullivan, Rev. T. R. His remarks at the annual meeting, 374.

T.

Tracts, the number circulated, 327.
Treasurer's Report, 322.

U.

Unitarians, Distinguishing opinions of, 1. Principles to be used in interpreting Scripture, 4. Unitarians believe, 1. In the unity of God, 13. In the unity of Christ, 19. In the moral perfection of God, 26. Unitarian views of the mediation of Christ and of the purpose of his mission, 32. Views of the nature of true holiness or Christian virtue, 37.

V.

Virtue, not happiness, the end of man's creation, 209. Because so taught by the Scriptures, 212. Because a bestowment and not an acquisition, 213. Because inferior in dignity and destitute of merit, 213. Inconsistent with the true nature of man, 215. Virtue to be sought for its own sake, 216. The opposite doctrine unfavorable to virtue, 217.

W

Ware, Dr. On the use and meaning of phrase "Holy Spirit, 141.
West, Religions and moral wants of, 234, 250. Need of Religious institutions, 260, Growth and prospects of the West, 262. Western character, 265. Influence of emigration, 267. Want of churches, 268. Unitarians have room for usefulness, 270. Unitarian missions, cause, objections to answer not prejudged and unpopular, 255. Not proselyting and sectarian, 258.
Whitman, Rev. Jason. His remarks at the annual meeting, 336.
Worcester, Rev. Dr. His "Thoughts on the Personality of the word of God," 93.